

THE LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO



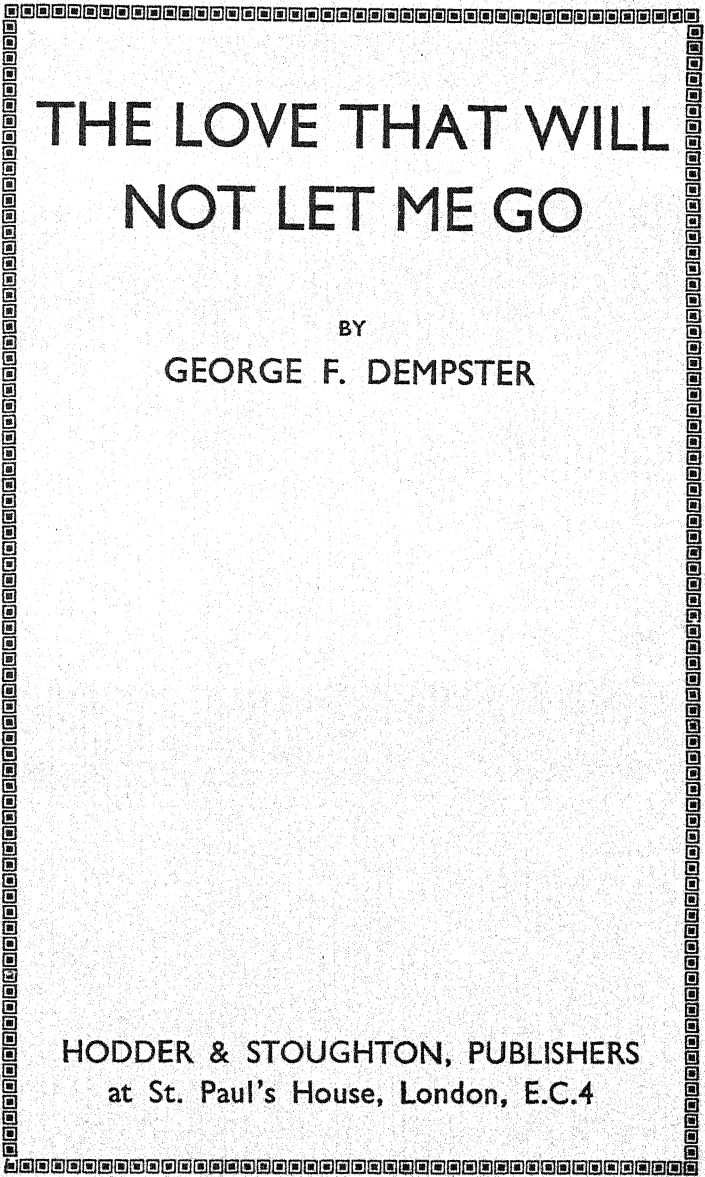


# THE LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO

BY  
GEORGE F. DEMPSTER

HODDER & STOUGHTON, PUBLISHERS  
at St. Paul's House, London, E.C.4

I-V E C E S E C U E E T I I I A I I



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## TO THE READER—

SINCE *Finding Men for Christ* was issued there has been abundant evidence that its publication was God directed.

Results of the kind continuously recorded could only occur as the consequence of human obedience and Divine fulfilment.

The first letter received by the author was from a prominent clergyman who desired to quote from the book in his pulpit ministry the following Sabbath but sought first the writer's assurance that 'it is true.'

That amazing request was followed by an avalanche of witness from all quarters that the book was stimulating Christian workers in every denomination,—was reviving the flagging faith of believers, and was the means of bringing decisions for Christ in churches, colleges, schools, banks, barracks, factories, ships and places of business all over the world, it therefore was true.

In these days it is being rediscovered that the "Old, old Story of Jesus and His Love," as revealed in the Bible and in the lives and experience of believers, is still the most attractive and powerful message to which men can listen. "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me." The Andrew method is the Divine one. The Master's instruction to His earliest disciples is the word we need to-day and nothing more. Wherever it is obeyed in love and simplicity there follows the same marvellous results. This is inevitable because His Word is Truth and cannot fail.

The 'greater things' of which He spake are being seen. Men and women steeped in forms of sin undreamed of in the days of His flesh,—save by Himself,—are being found and transformed by nothing other than the old method—one enlightened person seeking another who needs the light and bringing him to Jesus in love and confidence, under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

From all parts of the world testimony has reached us concerning the influences and activities awakened by the message of the book, and the most astounding things are happening.

Requests for translations into other languages were gratifying



enough, but to learn for instance that the Japanese, having translated it into their own tongue, had also transcribed it into Braille for their Japanese blind folk, and that these are now reading with their fingers to their sighted but illiterate fellow countrymen is most wonderful. Still more amazing is the statement that Japanese Christians are asking permission to transcribe it into Chinese Braille.

Truly His ways are past our finding out.

Passing a well-known London Church recently the writer saw a notice board announcing that an 'Andrew Fellowship' was to be initiated, and upon making enquiries he was informed that the minister of that Church having read *Finding Men for Christ* agreed with the author that in all probability it is to be by this 'finding' method that modern Church life is to be revived. Hence this minister invited his people to become 'fishers of men' after the manner of Andrew.

The apathy so prevalent to-day is due we think to a lack of that fundamental quality which should mark Christian discipleship—the Love of God.

In these days when the world is full of every kind of suspicion, jealousy, racial hatred, selfish nationalism, and wholesale fear, it is surely the more needful that we who say we love God should live and teach that Love in all its simple fulness. Its potency has never been diminished. It is still the greatest dynamic in the world. It 'never faileth.' Whatever else we deem it our duty to proclaim let us never cease making known the 'Love that Lifts' and under its sublime compulsion do the things which seem impossible.

The author has been quite unable to accept all the invitations he has received to occupy platforms and pulpits in all parts of the United Kingdom. He has accepted what were possible and the results have been astonishing.

One discovery has saddened him again and again. Everywhere there are parents whose hearts are heavy because of prodigal and missing sons and daughters; wives whose husbands have gone astray; husbands whose wives are absent under the most grievous circumstances; homes in which there are vacant chairs by reason of things worse than death.

In the undertaking of one search for a lost person it has been simply alarming to discover that the friend to whom one went in



the hope that he might be a helper in the search was himself heartbroken on account of his own son, daughter, sister or wife, mother or father.

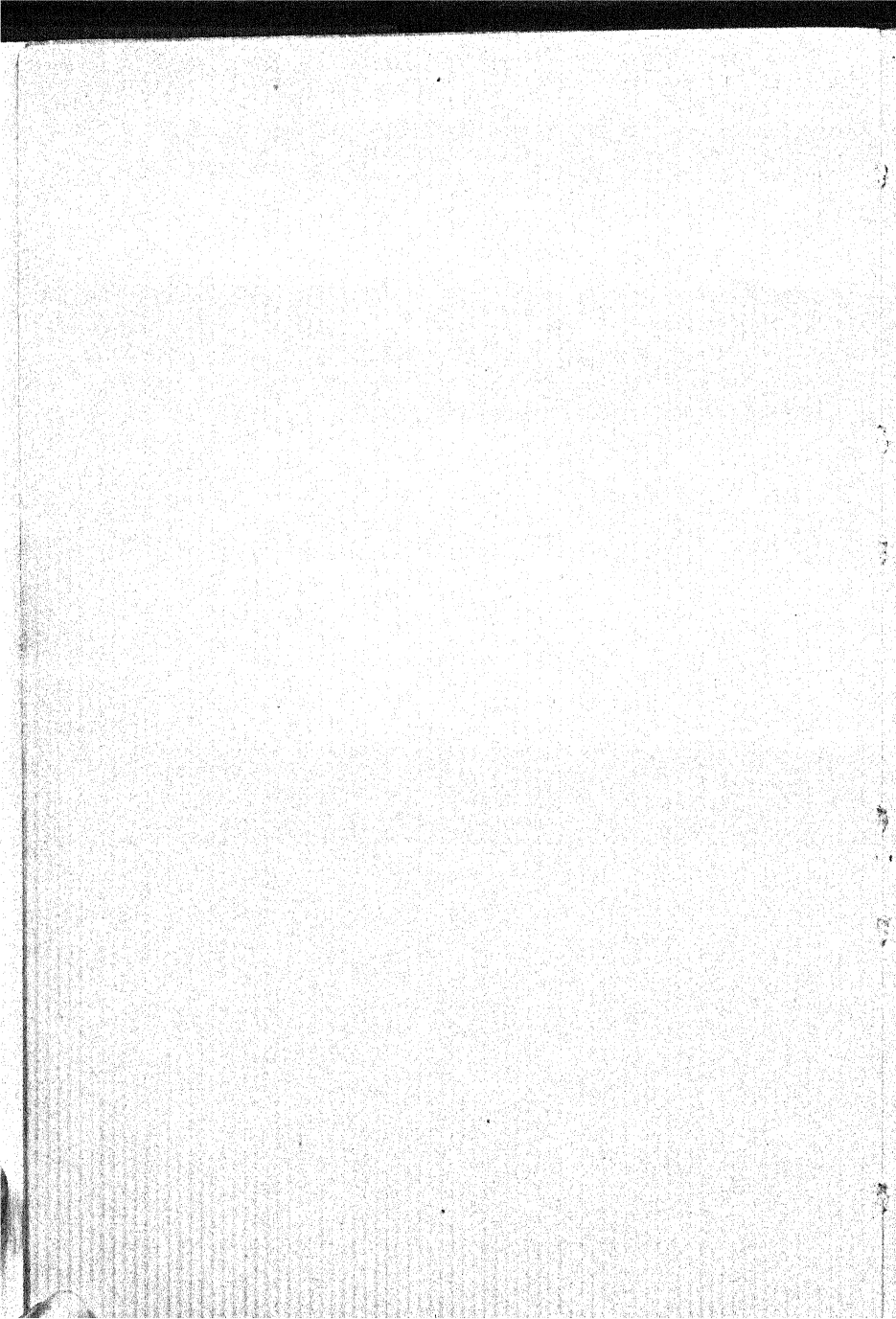
'Please help me to find my boy' has been the sorrowful request again and again. These sons are in somebody's parish,—but whose?

Only Love can find them—and Love will find a way, but it must be the Love that lifts *which is the Love that stoops*. "He loved me and gave Himself for me", truly realised means a heart that loves God with a love that stretches out to others.

It is therefore with the desire to stimulate my fellow disciples in this attitude of heart and mind that the following chapters are added. If these evidences help and inspire as the others have done the writer will rejoice and be grateful.

G. F. D.

SNARESBROOK,  
May, 1937.



## ONE

*"All things work together for good to them that love God."*

Rom. viii, 28.

HASTENING westward one morning along one of the streets running parallel with Aldgate toward the Tower of London, I had passed a man whose appearance had arrested my passing glance. In that instant, quicker than telegraphy, something passed from him to me. I believe also he was conscious of an influence he did not then understand.

We each paused and looked back and our eyes met. He swiftly resumed his walk away from me. But as swiftly I felt that I should have spoken to him. He was one of the most pitiable looking objects imaginable. Ragged and unkempt, his face distorted by an expression of contempt. His whole appearance that of a most miserable and evil tempered man, yet not without a something in his bearing which suggested other and better days.

I hurriedly retraced my steps and soon overtook him. Touching him on the arm and facing him I said "Good morning, friend; you are unhappy. Can I help you?" He flashed out angrily—"To hell with you! I want nothing to do with parsons."

"No, no, old chap, I'm not going to that awful place, for I have a better hope than that. Won't you let me be your pal? You need a friend—let me help."

He shook off my hand fiercely. "I say I want nothing to do with you. Get out of my way."

I did no such thing although he looked as if he would strike me. His eyes were bloodshot and piercing. He was very angry and bitter. He bore all the marks of evil living and the consequent depravity. But it was very clear to me that here was a lost man whom my Lord wanted me to bring to Him. But how? What could meet and overcome this resentment if such it really were? Was he in a mood to be approached by friendliness? If it were mere 'friendliness' the answer clearly was 'no.' Something stronger than mere professions of friendship

would be needed in this instance. There were obviously mountains of difficulty to overcome, oceans of prejudice and years of perverted judgment to correct.

But his speech did not express his real thought. Of that I was now becoming certain. Angry though he was and apparently resentful at being accosted by me, there was a hint in his tone that he was to some extent pretending.

In spite of his seeming ill-temper I held on to him. He was glaring wildly at me, and for a few moments we stood there in the open street just gazing into each other's eyes. On my part I was praying that what I unaided could not do, the love of God in my heart might achieve. The wild beast in him needed taming. No man could do that. No merely human words or acts would suffice. No argument could meet the pent up fury which seemed ready to burst forth into violence. But one thing could do it—'Love never faileth.'

Could love for the unlovely hold out? It did. He began to yield. As I held his wrists, for that was the position we had taken, it was almost as if we were about to wrestle physically. In reality it truly was wrestling—"Satan hath desired to have you, but I have prayed for you," I reverently quoted.

His resistance was weakening; his fierceness abating. I steadily looked into his eyes and held on without speaking more.

Then—"You say you want to be my friend?" he asked in a quieter tone with some remote suggestion of wistful eagerness which I quickly noted.

"Yes, I do."

Then another pause as if he were examining my very thoughts; as if he were struggling inwardly with memories I should never fathom; as if he were beating back unseen forces.

"Then," he suddenly began, "if you really want to be my friend, find out if my mother is still living."

Love was at work. It was beginning to lift, but I little thought then of how far it would have to stoop, nor what a terrible anguish would have to be endured ere this soul were won.

"I will try if you will permit me. Tell me where and how to begin." Already I saw signs that a victory had been gained in that bruised and defeated man's heart.

What 'chords that were broken' existed I did not yet know, but the 'touch of a loving hand' should be given.

"Come along and tell me how we can set about it."

My own original errand of that morning was out of mind. His earlier intention I know not. Possibly he was just aimlessly wandering as he had done for years, never imagining that "nearer than hands or feet, nearer than any beside" was "One Who loved him with a matchless love, "Who died to redeem him and to lead him back to the Father's Home." That He would use a man whom he did not know, who had never before consciously met him, who knew nothing of his sin, his misery, his yearning or his despair, to come alongside and find him for Christ.

We turned eastward and were soon at my home.

It was mid-December and in a few days Christmas would be here. As we entered the building he saw already the preparations we were making for the celebration of the Saviour's birthday. Once again I saw that wistful glance of this man's eyes as he took in the significance of the things he saw. He was made welcome and soon was warmed and fed. Over a cup of coffee he opened his heart to me and I perceived how great a chasm sin had made, and what evil would have to be overcome. Occasionally he would have to pause to recover self command. His thoughts, like those of the psalmist were 'too painful' for him.

For sixteen years he had been lost to his family. No word nor sign had he given them of his location or mode of life. Whenever the urge to do so had come to him he had plunged more recklessly into efforts to forget them. But now a growing gentleness was noticed in his speech as he proceeded to gradually unfold page by page the book of his prodigal years. Oh, the waste of it. Oh, the pity of it. Born of an excellent family in India, he had received a first-class education in England after the manner of such families. For the necessary years he had been placed in a well-known school here, little dreaming then, as he bitterly recalled to me, that in later years he would pass those old gates a human derelict and an outcast.

He had qualified for and entered the Indian Civil Service, bringing thus joy to a devoted mother's heart especially as her boy would then be near her. But he had secretly yielded to a craze for gambling. For a time he was able to hide it from all who knew him at home. Then gambling led to drinking and this was soon discovered. He contracted debts he could not meet and which his parents had to pay. Then his father died leaving his

widow with several other children to care for, B—— being the eldest. One was still in England, the others had just returned to India. For a time the added responsibility checked his wild tastes, but then he broke out afresh and new troubles came upon the home. He gave way entirely to drink, involved himself in heavy debts, lost his position and in the shame of it, he recklessly enlisted in the Army with a regiment about to be drafted home to England. He returned with them, but immediately upon landing here deserted and was soon without funds or friends.

Our modern Babylon soon swallowed him up as it does multitudes of similar human beings, and the inevitable pull of the East End of London drew him thither. After a time in spite of his education he joined the ranks of the Casual Docker. Between drinking bouts and odd jobs he had spent those sixteen years mainly 'down East' unknown and unnoticed until the day we met in Royal Mint Street, E.1. He admitted that he was then in a desperate and dejected mood ready for any tragic happening which might end his misery, blaming everybody but himself for the plight he was in. Now he was feeling different although still bitter and resentful.

"Nobody really cares, they only pretend. I've lost all faith in religious folk especially parsons. I wouldn't be here now if you had not almost dragged me here, and if you had not promised to try and discover if my mother is yet living. She is all I care about now, and if I knew she were dead I'd die too without the slightest hesitation."

"But you mentioned Hell," I reminded him.

"I did, and I've been living near it for years."

"Do you so like it that you want it for ever?"

"What do you mean?"—This was asked with a startled look and tone.

"I mean just what I say. Without Christ you have no hope of anything better. Have you?"

Since he made no reply to my question I followed this up. I could see that reflection along that line had challenged him.

"Do you really want to see your mother again?"

"Indeed I do, there's nothing else interests me; but if she's gone then——"

"Then—it's gloriously possible to meet her again."

"How?"



"Do you believe she has gone to Heaven?"

"If there is a Heaven she has gone there."

"And if she has do you not wish to go there too?"

A pause—a deep sigh that was almost a sob—and a holding away of his eyes which were glistening suspiciously.

"I'm not fit," he muttered and turned his face from me for his eyes were tearful.

It was but a few moments ere he completed his confession and whispered "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Here I will not attempt to record this sin-weary soul's struggle with the powers of darkness which had hitherto been mastering him. Any who have ever wrestled with evil forces and influences in such circumstances will understand. Quietly stated messages of Divine love and invitation were followed by pleading and urging for a decision. For more than an hour we thus strove. It was pathetic to observe the ebb and flow of his spiritual struggle. All kinds of doubts assailed him of which he only gave vague hints when he spoke, but like rays of light piercing dark shadows came flashes of hope and faith and desire. Gradually he won through and was presently more settled and calm.

He told me how much he had longed during the years of his wanderings for news of his mother, yet even as the intense longing for news of her recurred temptation swiftly pursued and he fell again for a period into utter abandon and recklessness. The desires grew less and less frequent until memory had almost faded out, when suddenly with my appearing and persistence there came an overwhelming yearning for his mother hence his fiercely expressed demand and challenge.

He tried to tell me something of the agonies of alternate recklessness and remorse, the while frequently gazing into my face as if doubting whether I could understand. Then shame would cause him to drop his eyes and bite his lips. I saw how terribly he was suffering mentally and I tried to spare him by interrupting. Repeatedly he expressed the conviction that he had no longer any power of resistance, that any attempt would be futile and that he had little or no desire to live.

By and by he gave me the address of the old home in India, but it was sixteen years old. Anything may have occurred during that long period. No time must therefore be lost.

That night—as the mail would be leaving next day, a letter was

posted addressed to the mother in careful language informing her that B—— (I used his Christian name) was alive and in London, but that his great anxiety was to know that his mother was still alive and able to receive his message of contrition. I gave no details in this communication but earnestly hoped that if the letter were received by the mother that she would reply at once. I made it known that he was eager to see her again if it could be made possible, and that he was determined by God's help to atone as far as he could for the anxiety he had caused.

It had been a difficult letter to write but gracious guidance was given and earnest prayer offered that it might reach its intended goal. Meanwhile a job had to be found for the prodigal. The great wool sales were then being held in the London Docks. These provide periodical work for numbers of extra hands, absorbing not only the army of regular staff, but many of the casual class, and not a few of those whom I will designate 'extra casuals.' Of this latter number I had personally some interesting experience, and was soon able to secure an opening for B——. The heavy work of handling great bales of packed wool I feared was beyond his physical strength, for he had literally 'wasted his substance in riotous living'—physically—materially and morally. Indeed I found that he was within measurable distance of total collapse. A few days' care, regular rest, abstinence from drink, good food, and helpful companionship wrought wonders, not only in his physical condition but in his mental outlook. He was engaged as a checker and proved both diligent and efficient. Day by day we saw him being restored to a proper sense of dignity. We began to perceive in him something of the personality he had almost destroyed by debauchery and negligence.

He partook of Christmas dinner at our own table in company with another similarly situated derelict whom he had helped me to find, and it was a great joy to observe the growing confidence which was now possessing him.

All the time he was tensely concerned for news from India.

Two months passed. Two months of most exacting watchfulness on our part, of terrific struggle on his. For several days he would seem fairly happy, then there would return to him a mood of irritability, uncertainty, almost a childish peevishness.

Trifles, as they seemed to us, would cause him to imagine himself the object either of neglect or opposition on the part of



those whom he now met in the new environment. One man whom he later grew to love as a brother was particularly difficult for him to understand. Born with none of B——'s advantages and bred in an entirely different kind of home, this man, who strove heroically to befriend our new convert, seemed always to be misunderstood by him. It was a most trying experience and only the power of Divine Love enabled us to bear with it.

"Is not easily provoked"—was tested to its limits. But it stood every strain and gradually the difficulty passed away. It was a great joy when one day B—— came to me and confessed that he had been nursing a 'supposed grievance' against Mr. P——. I listened patiently to his recital for here was the opportunity for which I had been praying.

"But Mr. P—— loves you," I said quietly. "At half-past nine last night he was in that chair upon which you are now sitting, telling me that he had been to see a friend in North London seeking for that suit of nearly new clothing which is in the box by your side. It is about your size and he brought it here for me to see and to hand on to you. At a quarter to ten o'clock he was kneeling in front of that chair with me asking the Lord Jesus to help you and bless you."

He was very pale and silent for a time, then taking my hand gently he said "How I need his forgiveness. I've been misjudging him. His buoyant manner has been taken for indifference to my misery. I thought he did not understand me and had no sympathy; that he was not capable of comprehending the bitterness of my experience nor the terrific force of my temptations."

Soon this matter was put right between them and they became very excellent friends; poles apart in many ways but made "One in Christ Jesus." This incident was characteristic of those days when, no doubt out of the evil past there came many a false idea poisoning his thoughts while we who were seeking to help him knew little of the real causes of his moods.

One thing I waited patiently for an opportunity to explore. Several times in the first conversations we had together he had used expressions of contempt for 'parsons.' I wondered why, and one day our talk provided an opening for him to explain this rather vehement deprecation against ministers of the Gospel. At first he tried to avoid the question just simply saying "I was

thoughtless and wrong in saying that." There was, however, some reason for the attitude he had adopted and I was anxious to remove if possible any misconceptions he might still have against those who should have been his friends and advisers. For some time he gave me no clue, but at length he admitted that he had been very bitterly disappointed in some in whom he had hoped to find an understanding of his troubles. He had met several to whom he had made some approach with a view to obtaining friendship and guidance, and I must confess that after he had told me the facts from his point of view, I felt a sense of shame that those whose sacred office should have guaranteed at least sympathy could only express harsh criticism and untempered blame. It seemed to me as he very quietly and self-reproachfully related the things he had experienced that there was an utter lack of that love which "seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things endureth all things."

This wanderer into the 'far country' had even met there men professing to be teachers of religion whose only religion apparently seemed to be empty formality and self-indulgence. Some things he reluctantly told me that day caused me to feel a great sense of humiliation and sorrow that such things could be true of professing disciples and holders of the sacred office. Then I remembered and confessed in my own heart that I too had been guilty of many sins both of commission and of omission, that I too may have misdirected some who looked for sympathy and leading. This man, though he did not know it then, was doing me good by revealing once again how subtle is the power of sin that it obtains possession of hearts where there should be grace sufficient to repel it, hearts which are not 'kept' by the garrison of His Love. I told him this and in thus confessing helped him to understand and forgive those of whom he had held very bitter and hard memories.

I am here led once again to say that the message of the Christian minister both in speech and life is surely one consistent theme—no less than that Gospel which Jesus Himself proclaimed at the beginning—nothing more, nothing less than the Love of the Father. Yet to-day from many pulpits the attempt to meet the alleged wishes of the hearers results in orations about all sorts of

subjects which neither reach the hearts nor satisfy the needs of the people.

From time to time preachers are tempted by very specious suggestions to adjust their utterances to suit what are called 'modern conditions,' which it is assumed require different treatment from that which previous generations needed. Every succeeding generation or age has been modern, and the Love of God is ever modern, it fits every age and nothing can better fit the need of our day and generation than a wholehearted and simple teaching and expression of God's infinite and unchanging love. The love which shone out of the Lord's eyes and heart that day when Peter was in bad company warming himself by the fire in the courtyard of the high priest's house,—when "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter"—the love which both read the guilt of Peter's denial but yearned for the denier,—that Love will ever and always speak above the din of the rabble and the eloquence of the clever, sending us who have sinned to go out and 'weep bitterly.'

During those two months there was daily evidence of a growth of confident hope and of a return to a culture and gentleness which were his real characteristics. Chords that had been broken were 'vibrating once more.'

So the days passed, and I could only dimly comprehend the anxiety which possessed this brother's heart. He was very patient. Grace was being given him to endure, and in many ways those days of heart hunger were a blessing to the privileged few who knew something of this man's story and were praying for him.

There were times when it seemed that evil would triumph. Days that were disappointing if only the immediate were considered. But the minister of Christ must come to an understanding of that word—"tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope."

This man had many a fall before he gained the final victory. Deep depressions of spirit would fall upon him. He would have periods of days together when he would be in the deeps of bitterness and almost despair. Like a feverish child he needed all the care and patient tenderness of a nurse or a mother to recover him.

On one occasion he had disappeared entirely and I could get no trace of him until another client unconsciously gave me a clue.

Two nights previous, it was casually remarked, this new client had been among the disappointed ones at a nightly shelter in the neighbourhood but he had seen B—— among the successful crowd admitted. At this place about 350 men were given a free lodging and food each night upon application and regardless of all other considerations. I had often seen the crowd waiting and now I resolved to visit the place myself in the hope of finding B——.

If he should see me searching for him, he might easily evade me if he were so minded, but if I could discover him unawares it might be possible to get him back again.

I decided to be one of the string of applicants next day. Med-land Hall as it was then called was situated in an old back street near Stepney railway station. It had the appearance of a derelict chapel with a history. It faced a fairly wide roadway which ran alongside the Regent Canal Dock up toward the main thoroughfare of Commercial Road East, and I had seen a long queue of men, perhaps four or five hundred of them, waiting in all kinds of weather from early morning until the time when the door was opened to admit the required number. Since only that number could be accommodated there was often a large proportion at the end of the line disappointed. It was a most depressing sight to observe the procedure as the day wore on. A keen competition for places developing as hour by hour passed, until frequently there were angry passages between those who thought they should take precedence.

Yet even here I have witnessed the most wonderful evidences that in the least suspected persons there remains that spark of the Divine which can be fanned into a flame.

On this very day I saw it and to my intense satisfaction it was B—— who again revealed that our efforts to save him were not entirely wasted.

I had arrived at the scene about one o'clock thinking that as it was one of those drizzling wet days the crowd might be fewer than on some occasions. Instead I found that there were at least two hundred men in the ranks four deep and stretching for a considerable distance along the road facing the Hall. It was, therefore, a question to be decided by me whether I should search the line for the man I wanted or go in with the crowd and search later. I decided on the latter course and being dressed as the

others were I was not conspicuous. I therefore joined the waiting crowd which grew enormously. For some three hours we stood, each man rigidly keeping his place for fear of losing altogether his chance of the night's 'doss' and the food. It was during this wait and just a few minutes before opening time that an old man passed along slowly seeming to have given up hope of inclusion with the fortunate ones. I noticed him because of his air of respectability. At a glance I could see that he had known better days. From my position as the inside unit of a file of four I was only able to observe him as he passed, but a moment or two later I became conscious that something was happening along the line. All the men near me were interested and we saw that there was a mild argument. Some one in the line had evidently given up his right to a place to the old man, and there was a momentary scene because another younger man had insisted that it should be he who would sacrifice his chance. I then saw that the man who first offered to resign was none other than B—— for whom I was looking. He contended for the privilege of 'giving his place to dad,' but the younger man settled the question by simply walking away. "Gawd bless 'im," I heard one of my nearest neighbours say as the younger man disappeared.

Thereupon followed a conversation upon the respective claims and merits of the situation.

Now what should I do? Should I create another scene and bring B—— into the limelight or would it not be better to follow on, watch where he was placed inside and then quietly tackle him.

I chose the latter course although it might involve me in a night's lodging in an unanticipated place. It was to be a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Presently the line began to move forward and it was evident that 'they're goin' in.'

We proceeded at a slow pace, all thoroughly drenched and utterly miserable, I meanwhile keeping a close watch upon B—— who was preceding me. As we were admitted we were supplied with two 'doorsteps'—(thick slices of bread and jam) and a mug which later on was filled with hot cocoa. Inside there was a remarkable scene. Facing the entrance was a platform upon which the man who conducted the proceedings was standing. Behind him painted on the wall were texts and other wise words. A gallery ran round three sides of the big square room and on the

floors were ranged rows upon rows of shallow benches covered with black American waterproof cloth. They reminded me of nothing else than coffins. Upon these we all sat to eat our meal and then there was a short talk and some singing. It was my first visit and I was not so familiar with the programme as some of my neighbours apparently were. They sang lustily save for one here and there who mocked or ridiculed. Most of them were old hands whose identity had long since been lost in the misery of their precarious existence. But a few could be seen who were new to this way of life and one longed to be able to get at them with the message of Divine Love and Power. My man was seated two rows in front of me so that I could observe him unseen by him.

At a given signal certain of the men were sent up into the gallery and the rest of us were so rearranged that each man had a bench to himself. I then learned that these benches were our beds and that we had to turn them upside down and get into our—'coffins.' I found that those bedboxes, though doubtlessly kept as clean as possible under the circumstances, and although intended for the use of one person only, had in addition other unauthorized 'lodgers' whose presence entirely and effectively prevented one from even a pretence of sleeping.

Several cards bearing the word in large letters 'SILENCE' hung about, and were entirely disregarded despite the presence of those who had charge of the place and who did their best to enforce the law by friendly persuasion. However, gradually the conversations ceased, and the din subsided until it became a sort of drowsy hum. The men had made the best use of their odds and ends of coats as pillows or coverings and we pretended to settle down for the night. In the box next to mine there was a most interesting fellow and of him there is a story yet to be told. My main interest was centred in that box some distance away in which lay B—— all unconscious of my proximity.

Soon there were sounds emanating from many parts of the building which now was only dimly lit by small gas jets covered by wire cages, indicating that some at least were sleeping and oblivious to all the weird and disturbing conditions. The air was stifling and the odour almost unbearable. Ventilation there was but it would have required the whole roof to be removed to satisfy those not inured to it.

I heard the doors being fastened and presumed this was a

precautionary measure which experience had proved to be necessary. This decided me that, beside the personal discomfort due to the fact that I was not the only occupant of my box, it would be best to take some steps at once. It was now about eleven o'clock. I decided to quietly make my way to B——'s box and try to get him to leave with me. I sat up and looked around.

The scene is difficult to describe. As I write about it I recall that it reminded me of a certain occasion on which as a tiny boy I saw rows of bodies laid out for identification after that ghastly tragedy when the steamer *Princess Alice* had been sunk in the Thames and hundreds were drowned. It seemed like a huge mortuary for dead souls if it had not been for the curious medley of weird and wonderful snores—of painful and prolonged coughing. This latter was to me a revealing and tragic feature. It indicated the sad state of many of these men's bodies. Constant exposure, insufficient food, uncleanly habits, and all manner of transgression of the laws of God brought the inevitable results. What a collection of material for proving that "the soul that sinneth it shall die." Here was death of all that was beautiful, of good report, of worthiness, of the image of God. Many of these—my fellow men—had become mere animals with no aspirations, no happiness, no hope. Oh that one could teach them the meaning and power of the Love of God.

Yet I recalled that all were not dead. There was that man in whom had been begun the work of grace. I must make another effort to recover him. That one was, I knew, not the only one. There were others here who needed finding for Christ Who could make all things new. He loved every man of them, however degraded. He was yearning over them even then as I prayed—but only He was sufficient to save.

I quietly arose and stepped out of my box and made my way to the side of B——'s box, stumbling as I went and earning thereby a few coarse criticisms which need not be repeated here.

B—— was asleep, and as I sat down by his side and looked at him I fell to wondering perplexedly as to what it could be that caused a man like this to deliberately throw away all that love was waiting to do for him, and to prefer an existence of this sort.

There came to my mind once more the words of the Master to Simon Peter just after that great Supper, "Satan hath desired to have you . . . but I have prayed for you."



The power and tyranny of sin are great, but thank God the power of His Spirit is greater.

I gently touched B——'s hands which were clasped upon his breast. He awoke with a start and a sharp "What do you want?" He could hardly see me in the dim light, but when I spoke to him he sat up, rubbed his eyes and stared. I had to repeat my words.

"B—— laddie, I've come to take you back with me."

He whispered my name—put out a trembling hand and then said "Yes. I'll come, but how did you find me here?"

"Never mind that now, come along quickly and I'll tell you later."

Like a chastened child he arose, put on his coat which had served for a pillow, and together we groped our way to the door. It was bolted and locked.

Hearing us moving about one of the stewards came to see what was the matter and a few whispered words soon explained the situation.

I recall that walk through the dark back streets of Stepney and Shadwell, and the conversation as we stepped along arm in arm, he seeming to need physical as well as moral support until in a very different kind of bed he rested for the remainder of the night. We asked no explanations, knowing only too well what had happened. He did volunteer the statement with tearfulness and evident humiliation that having fallen he was too ashamed to meet me.

Love is not that mere sentiment so often mistaken for the real thing. Love is courageous, it defends, it adventures. If the Church on earth really loved her Lord, there would soon be an end to many of those evils by which at present she is hindered.

While it is not the place of the Church to line up with political parties or factions, it certainly is her duty to denounce everything which makes it hard and sometimes impossible for the poor to do right.

We ought not to allow evil to ride rough shod over those who have no means of self-defence, nor to permit those in authority to make laws giving boundless opportunities for selfish ends to some while oppressing those who have no chance. I have seen men grow rich and fat upon the sweating and bleeding of their fellow creatures, and this challenges Love as it did in His day. "Love vaunteth not itself" but "rejoiceth not in iniquity."



Gradually B—— grew stronger and stronger. We witnessed praisefully the reawakening of latent abilities and powers. We saw Love winning in this personality, and even when seeming to suffer defeat smiling through to another effort and another victory.

In due time there came with my morning post a letter addressed in a shaky handwriting, the envelope of thin foreign paper, the postage stamp an Indian one. It was from his mother herself.

"My dear, dear friend," it ran, "how can I thank you for your letter about my B——. The dear lad is alive and well, bless our God! So He has answered my constant prayers and has brought me tidings of him. Please tell him all is forgiven and he is to come and see me again before I die. I am getting old and the long anxiety has worn me out. I've prayed and prayed not knowing whether I should ever see my boy again. Thank you, Sir, for your beautiful message and may God reward you in His own way. . . . Do try and get him back to me. I am not able to send you the money for his fare as we are now badly off. . . ."

When I handed that letter to him to read, he broke down and cried like a child. He took it away to read it again, and when I next saw him he said—"I must go home, but how?"

That subject was a topic of conversation for many days and was the object of many interviews.

By the next mail came another letter. Already that mother had been busy.

"Tell B—— there will be a berth awaiting him whenever he can get to India, only tell him to be quick for I'm getting very old. . . ."

Alas! it was nearly two more years before B—— left England. Several severe lapses have to be recorded. Twice he had to be released from custody, having been found insensible in the street through drink. Twice I had to go long distances to fetch him when friends advised me of his condition. His contrition each time was heartrending.

"Doctor (he always called me his doctor), Doctor, you'll not desert me, will you? You'll stand by me and I will win yet by God's help!" And he did.

One day I said "Good-bye" to him as he took his place on board an Eastern bound steamer. A working passage had been found for him by the help of friends interested in the story, and he duly sailed for India.

With great joy I record a sequel which is more convincing than any correspondence subsequently received.

One of the most thought provoking and interesting sights in the world to a student of human nature is to witness the arrival of a great ship from a far distant country. Slowly she steams alongside the quay—orders are shouted by those in command—whistles sound shrilly—there is a hurrying and bustling both on the decks of the ship and on the quays alongside. Eager eyes are watching for the first sign of familiar and expected faces. Now and again shouts of recognition and joy are heard as friends long parted are reunited even though there still be those seemingly interminable minutes of waiting for the gangways to be opened and the official formalities to be negotiated. Groups of anxious folk who have not yet seen their expected friends, betokening by their manner and appearance all kinds of human experience. The play of human emotions is very tense, tragic, revealing. The crowd of voyagers begins to emerge from the great ship. Small parties, larger groups and—single individuals. Who are they all? From whence? Whither?

A detached observer must leave all these questions unsolved. He may imagine—he may even shrewdly guess at some, but he knows none.

Such was I one day at the Royal Albert Dock. Certainly I had seen a few familiar seafarers and officials, but of the passengers I knew none. Yet out of that ship was to come the amazing evidence of answered prayer. With no thought in my mind concerning any particular individual I just observed and wondered greatly. As the crowds dissolved, I was walking toward the dock exit making my way back to my office.

At the gate I observed among the crowd emerging a young fellow in the uniform of a ship's officer. He was heavily laden with two bulky cases and was making for the tramcar near by. I too was intending to join that car. I offered to help the lad with his load. He smilingly accepted with a "Thank you, padre."

We occupied the same seat on the top deck and finding he was not familiar with the district and had no definite destination in London, only intending for a short stay "in some suitable hostel" that matter was soon settled by my inviting him to come with me to the "best place I knew." He wanted to see a bit of

the great city since his ship had brought him here, and as he would not be "signing on" again for a fortnight he could spare a few days in the Metropolis. Thus he informed me and I proffered to give him the advice he needed in order to make the best use of his time. He seemed very glad indeed to have met with a useful friend so soon after landing. He had been told of a certain hotel where he would find comfortable lodging and convenient access to the particular places known by name only to myriads overseas, but when he gave me the name of that hotel, I knew the type of so-called friend who had thus referred him. In a few minutes I had convinced him that it was no place for him, and I was grateful for one more instance of preventing possible disaster. I was not then aware of the fact that he was under better Counsel than I could offer.

Presently I ventured to comment upon the fact that by his appearance he was not a native of this country.

"You were not born in England," I said questioningly.

"No! I was born in India. This is my first real visit as most of my time has been served out East, and I was only once in an English port—Southampton—and then only for a short time. I have always wanted to see London and I'm fortunate in meeting you, padre."

In a few moments I was not only 'fortunate' in meeting him, but knew that this meeting was planned.

"What part of India?" I asked.

"M——, sir. I was born there and never left that part until I came away to sea. Now I have been away from home for several years owing to the kind of ships in which I have been serving. I am looking forward to seeing my home folk in the near future. Do you know M——?"

Leaving his question unanswered, I asked him another.

"Did you go to school in M——?"

"Yes, I did. Owing to our family's circumstances I was not sent away as so many of the children of English families are."

"Then perhaps—I may know one of your schoolmasters."

It was his turn to look interested. He eagerly awaited my mention of a name.

"Was there a Mr. Basil N—— at your school?"

His face beamed with obvious pleasure.

"There was indeed, and I've had the privilege of knowing him

for some years. One of God's gentlemen. I owe him a lot. Fancy you knowing him. Then you must have been in M—— yourself."

"No! I have never seen M—— but I know Mr. N——"

"Where did you meet him then, Sir?"

I could not tell the young man that story, for his schoolmaster—"one of God's gentlemen"—was the man I had met in Royal Mint Street—was the prodigal who for sixteen years had strayed in the very region to which we were now going.

"Well, well! Isn't that fine, to meet one who knows Mr. N——?"

Then he gave me a bigger joy still. Feeling in his breast pocket he brought out a well used copy of the New Testament.

With a happy smile as he handed me the book he said:

"He not only gave me much of my education, Sir, but he taught me 'to read and understand this'."

Opening the fly leaf of the little Book I saw through misty eyes an inscription in a well known handwriting:

To —— with my best wishes.

Commending him to the care of the Heavenly  
Father through Jesus my Saviour.

B—— N——.

The signature and writing were those of the man whom I had almost passed by when he was in the grip of despair. I made it clear to my young friend that I was delighted at what he told me, and I learned much more which proved how mightily Love had lifted this soul from the depths of degradation to not only respectable citizenship but to powerful discipleship.

I found that this young officer was full of zeal for Christ and had considerable experience in witnessing for Him among his fellow seafarers. As he had not made arrangements for his temporary accommodation while in port it was my privilege to do this for him. Very soon he and I were seated at a table in the Sailors' Palace, Commercial Road, continuing our conversation over a meal. Before he rejoined his ship he became a member of the Sailors' Brotherhood whose Resolution reads:

"I will try with the help of God to lead a clean and manly life, to read my Bible, to follow Christ, and help my brother man."

Thousands have similarly enrolled in that movement, of many nationalities and languages, and this young officer became a keen recruiter. A Christian sailor man is a whole time missionary.

He is able very literally to go "into all the world and preach the gospel" both by his life and his testimony and such was this man whom I had met so wonderfully and so unexpectedly.

It appears to me as I recount these happenings, about which it has been my privilege to speak from many pulpits and platforms, that if my fellow disciples would in their own ways witness to the personal efficacy of God's love in their own lives more of such gracious fruits would result. Wherever one has initiated conversations with those presumed to be "of the household of faith" one has felt that there has been a desire to continue such fellowship when once reserve has been broken through.

What, therefore, is the cause of this reserve or diffidence? Is the 'boldness' which characterised the early followers of Jesus a lost quality—or is it being exercised with less efficacy?

Frankly, I think it is not being exercised by us because we do not love as they did. But wherever a heart becomes filled with a real love for God something happens which cannot be attributed to any skill, or wisdom of the human agents. Love still works miracles—mighty miracles, and if when we pray "Thy Kingdom Come" we would let go of all our selfish interests—all our foolish ideas of class, creed, colour, education, possessions and the like, and just begin afresh to love our fellow men for Christ's sake, there and then the Kingdom would come into other hearts. Love takes men and women to the seemingly impossible task and accomplishes it through unexpected agencies. Our God is Almighty and His Name is Love.

When Jesus was being driven along that dusty road to Calvary and the angry hordes of people were making the journey even more terrible by their gibes and mockings, one of the Roman soldiers with a little more human pity than the others called upon one of the crowd to help Jesus carry His Cross.

That helper was a man of colour, and he did that day, possibly under the compulsion of fear, that which many since would gladly have shared under another compulsion—that of Love. Jesus permitted that day an act of co-operation which should for ever have taught us that the differences we so much magnify to-day are but barriers to be overcome. He also taught us how to

overcome them. Love is the way, and it 'never fails' whatever may be the appearance at the moment—it always finds a way.

In my next story this is revealed in a remarkable fashion, and I at once confess that the issues were undreamt of by me at the early stages of the incidents. All I knew then was that here was a brother man in trouble and in need of a friend, and that he had come to me because he knew that he would find a person ready to listen to him with patience although his present need was physical and he was a man of colour.

It has been part of my daily experience for many years to be brought into contact with all kinds of men of colour. Men from every part of the world where such men are found—North, South, East, West. Esquimaux, Arabs, Indians of all kinds, Africans, Kaffirs, Somalis, Chinese, Japanese, and so on and I have found among them many splendid gentlemen. In our stupid ignorance we group them all together, label them according to their worst specimens and call them by some reproachful name imagining that there is some loss of dignity or prestige if we admit their association with white folk. But whether they be black, brown, red, or yellow, they are our brethren. Backward—undeveloped, juvenile in their outlook on life as we know it maybe,—but our younger brethren, and included in 'the world' for which Christ suffered and died because He loved.

## TWO

*"And thy neighbour as thyself." "And who is my neighbour?"*  
 Luke x, 27-29.

"**S**AH! I hear dat you do wonnerful tings for us coloured fellahs."

So replied a dusky son of Africa who had been brought to my office one day.

"Well! What can I do for you?"

He simply repeated the above assertion. That phrase as used

by him implied a reputation including both material and spiritual service. It was certainly true, for by the guidance and blessing of God 'wonderful' was the only true description for the things which had been, and which still are being accomplished.

I had seen many ugly specimens of coloured humanity in my years of contact with other races, ugly both in character and in physical features. But the black man who was now facing me was repulsively ugly. I did not discern at first what it was that made him so repellent in appearance. A second closer look, however, revealed a particularly awful looking wound in the part of his face where his nose should have been.

"Yes, but what can we do for you?"

In slow emphatic tones and with his eyes fixed upon me he said again in a most serious manner.

"Sah! you do mos wonnerful tings for us coloured fellahs." I wondered what he had in mind. Long and intimate dealings with his kind had made me cautious. I had discovered that the simple mentality of this type was capable of an infinite variety of subtleties. I had met some highly educated, trained in music, medicine, science and handicrafts who nevertheless were not grown up—they were still boyish in their outlook and attitude toward life. There are many brilliant exceptions, but with the average it seems we must treat our coloured brethren with all the care and gentleness we would shew toward a younger brother remembering always that he will grow up one day. Great is the responsibility of the privileged white races toward those souls who happen to dwell in temples with darker skins, and who have a heritage so hard for most of us to recognize or understand. The average white person does not even comprehend the differences which exist between the various races of coloured folk. Differences as wide and deep as those between a London Cockney and a Swede, or a Scot and a Swiss. The Hindu is poles apart from the negro of Sierra Leone, and the West Indian has but little affinity with the Arab; yet they are all members of the great human family and they have but one Father—our God.

Our present friend was of the Zanzibar folk. One who had mingled for years with the mixed crowds found in the fo'c'sles and stokeholds of big steamers and in the various ports where British merchant ships do business. Such usually become a queer mixture of good and evil. They do not generally accept



without much evidence that the Christian white man is a really superior being. Our business dealings with them have bred in their minds grave doubts as to our sincerity. Yet they are quick to discern the real and genuine quality which we say is the hall mark of Christian discipleship.

This man had seen all kinds of white folk. He had been subject to the skipper whose methods of control savoured of a convict settlement, and he had also been brought into contact with white women whom he almost worshipped. He had met in the stokeholds of ships the dregs of humanity, but he had also been melted to tears by the care and attention of doctors, nurses and missionaries whose hearts the Lord had touched.

So he had developed a character of child-like trustfulness and deep craftiness. Now what was he really after?

"Yes! Well, what can we do for you?"

"Can you get me a new nose, sah?"

I had another look at his face. Sure enough he had no nose at all. There was a divided cavity where his nose had been, and now I fully realized why he was so ugly. Many of his type had broad coarse noses above their thick bold lips—but his nose had gone altogether.

The pathetic appeal would, under ordinary circumstances have caused one to feel inclined to smile, but to the man himself it was apparently a matter of deepest concern. He was almost in tears.

The introduction slip which had been brought with him described him as a 'fireman'—gave his name as Thomas G——, his age 34—his birth place Zanzibar, and his last ship as a year ago. It was probable therefore that his disfigurement had been a prejudice against his re-employment. So that was the cause of his eager enquiry.

"I am not sure whether we have any of your colour in stock," I replied. At that he grinned, and if his face was ugly before it was now fiendish. "But we'll see what can be done. How did you lose your first one, Thomas?"

"Me and another chap had a friendly argiment sah. Den we had a fight. Den I get him up agin a wall—so." Here he shewed me that he had gripped his opponent by the wrists and had thus pinned him with arms outstretched against a wall. The other man had one weapon left—his teeth.



"Den I lose my nose."

An enquiry was made at the Royal Albert Dock Seamen's Hospital where he was admitted, and a very clever surgical operation carried through, by grafting a piece of skin from his own forehead.

In about six weeks Thomas was again announced. This time he appeared with the broadest of smiles, looking very different and with quite a respectable nasal appendage.

"I'se got a new nose, sah. 'Im's a good un. Come to shew you, sah. Now I git im a job right nuff."

I inspected his face and then said seriously to him—"That's very good, my boy, but sit down, I want to talk to you. Now you told me how you lost your first nose. You had been drinking and fighting. You had been in very bad company. You were a bad man. Your heart was all wrong. You want a new heart."

His face changed at once. Alarm took the place of pleasure. He put his hand to the part of his anatomy where he imagined his heart to be and said "You can't git me new 'art, sah!"

"No! I cannot but I know Who can."

He was clearly mystified so I had to try and make clear to this poor black brother what was meant by a 'new heart.'

You who read this need no such explanation, but it was an entirely new idea to Thomas that Someone could take away from him all desire for the things which are wrong, and could give him new thoughts, new purposes, new desires, a 'new heart.'

"As to a little child" the matter had to be explained. But the new nose was a great illustration. He understood that. The sense of improved convenience and improved appearance did nore than impress him, it was fact.

Now he was told that Jesus could also take away his old wicked nature and put in its place what he began to call a 'Jesus heart.' I do not know how far one is justified in such a case in using our theological terminology. It was out of the question to use the word repentance to Thomas. In much simpler terms he was enabled to understand being sorry for sinning against God. He did grasp the meaning of believing and loving his Father in Heaven. The story of Jesus bearing his sins away, and sending His Spirit to live inside him—in his heart—appealed to him mightily.

"I want 'im in dere," he said indicating his heart. "I want

Jesus heart." An hour or more we spent in this kindergarten sanctuary, in conversation far removed from the academic discourse, to which we so often treat our other 'little children' when they sit under our public ministry. Praying for the Spirit's guidance I sought earnestly that I might 'find' this man's soul and bring it to the Lord. We kneeled in prayer and I suggested that if he really did want a new heart he should ask the great Father just as he had asked for a new nose.

He tried to do this.

"God almighty you give Thomas a new nose; im very tankful; im sorry he spoiled his 'art too; im bin very wicked; im want a new 'art, please God—a Jesus 'art.—Amen."

For some weeks Thomas leaned very heavily upon his earthly friends. Day after day he came, and waited patiently while others were dealt with, that he might see the 'reverend doctor.' Then a few quiet words seemed to put him at rest and we saw the work of grace changing him. Gradually he became more confident and one day, coming upon him unexpectedly we found him telling another coloured man of his experience. Some casual engagements were made for him to earn a few shillings at The School of Oriental Languages where he was useful for conversational purposes to those studying his native tongue—Swahili. A distinguished lady, late professor at the school, was a great friend to him in this matter, sending for him again and again.

Then we were able to get him away to sea again in his old capacity, and I lost sight of him for a period.

I had been calling at one of the Government Offices in Whitehall one day when I met a friend who had just been transacting business elsewhere.

"I've just seen a friend of yours," he said, after we had greeted.

"Oh!—Where and who?" I asked.

"Scotland Yard!"

"Yes! I've many friends there. Whom did you meet?"

"A black man with a new nose—a splendid case."

"Ah yes! a great bit of surgery that," I responded, thinking my friend referred to the case in that connection.

"I don't mean the surgery," he said, "that was clever; but I mean his conversion."

"How do you know about that?" I eagerly enquired.

Then he told me that he had himself just left one of the superior officials at 'the Yard,' as it is familiarly called, who had related the incident as Thomas was leaving.

"There's no doubt about that darkey's conversion. He came here to see about his papers and when the business was finished, he turned to Mr.—, my chief, and said to him. "You got a Jesus 'art, sah? Thomas G—, im has a new nose and im has a new 'art—a Jesus 'art!"

This had rather startled the police official. Not often, if ever, had he been so addressed.

"What do you mean?" he asked the darkey.

Then he had to listen to the whole story. He was thrilled, for he was a very decided Christian, and he invited Thomas to tell his story again to colleagues whose official duties were, I am afraid, interrupted that day in a most unorthodox way.

Had I asked permission to visit Great Scotland Yard, the headquarters of London's unrivalled police force in order to witness for Christ, I should probably have been told very politely but firmly that "the regulations do not permit, &c., &c." This simple native that day preached Christ in this unpremeditated way in a most unusual place. Having friends there to whom I could make such a request, I later asked about this incident and it was confirmed to me that the faithful witness given in such an unsophisticated manner had "made some of us remember our own needs in the sight of God."

"The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth."

Life has been so full of such happenings revealing the illimitable power of love that it is difficult to decide which of them one can include in these chronicles. If the reader has had patience to read thus far it is probably already perceived that the author's purpose is simply to stimulate that love and to send others seeking those whom they may find and bring to Jesus. "Go ye into all the world . . . And lo I am with you always." But it must be a loving quest. Any other incentive is doomed to disappointment. No other impulse can either discover or endure.

Searches for men have been made in many curious places. Busy workshops—city streets—in the great docks—aboard ships—in quiet country lanes—sweltering market places—city offices,

on trams and omnibuses—in hovels—in mansions—all these have been eagerly explored with loving earnestness and it has been proven again and again that there is no place where Christ cannot enable His willing disciples to “let their light shine.”

I beg you my fellow Christians who are now reading these printed words to pause for a moment or two in order to ask yourself whether the real motive of your own life is really “the love of Christ” or something less. If you can rejoice without boast or vainglory that this moment it is this great power which enables you to carry on—to achieve in His Name—to overcome all those subtle insinuations about self-preservation, self-advancement—self-interest and the like in order to do better work, then to Him be the glory. Rejoice exceedingly in such a realization. But if a prayerful examination of your life reveals the truth that your Christian life is weak and ineffective,—most unsatisfying and disappointing, I venture to declare that it is because you are not filled with that personal affection for your Lord and Saviour which He says is the first and greatest law of the Kingdom,—you do not Love Him. Admiration is not sufficient. A deep interest is but a platitude. Outward conformity is a mockery. He is content with nothing less than your love, and only this can He honour.

Look abroad upon the visible churches of to-day. Examine humbly the many activities professing to be Christian. Look into the lives of many who are known to you as leaders of big Christian organizations and ask “is Love the real motive?” Look into your own heart. It is humiliating and revealing. We are needing more than anything else a recognition of where we stand in these things. He knows what is in men’s hearts and I fear is often grieved as He reads us.

Too often we take it for granted that the whole purpose of His Sufferings and Sacrifice was to save and comfort us with a sense of security.

No wonder that many are to-day holding aloof from such a creed, for it is a mockery. It is true that He died to save us, but He also died to ‘make us good’ with a goodness which is not the smug thing so many seem to imagine.

There is little of Love in merely listening week after week to comforting addresses about God, and doing nothing at all to make His world safer and better for our fellow men.

"Love seeks not her own," but in seeking the good of others finds the highest and purest joy possible on earth.

I know that He is wanting you who read this to undertake some bit of personal work for Him. Where and what that work is I do not pretend to know. But this I venture to predict that if you love Him with all your heart and soul and strength and mind now, it will not be long before He leads you to perceive that there is a duty no other can do, and in the doing of it for Love's sake you will see "greater things than these."

How impossible it would have been to plan the events related in my next chapter! But equally how impossible would have been the fulfilment without that Love which believeth all things are possible with Him with Whom we have to do.

### THREE

*"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."*—1 John iii, 1.

THE evening express from the far north was about to start for its long run South to London. I had booked a 'sleeper' on board. As I was stepping toward my compartment which I discovered I was to share with two other men, an official who knew me suggested that he thought I should be more comfortable if he changed my position on the train. Naturally I was glad to avail myself of his kind thought and agreed to the exchange feeling as I did so that as I had not sought the alteration myself there was some other good reason for doing so which had not yet been revealed to me. As no other seats were to be occupied in that new compartment I should at least have privacy and quiet. This was, I assumed, the motive of my friendly official who had also informed me that very few were travelling that night so that there was plenty of room on the train.

At the last minute there came along the platform a man who,

after inspecting each of the sleeping compartments made toward the one which had been specially set for me. The official seeing this came toward him and endeavoured to entice him to another unoccupied compartment. They went off together, but the new arrival would have no other but mine and returned with an air of finality which prevented all further discussion. I could hardly enter into the matter, four berths being the full sleeping accommodation, and I could only occupy one. So it was settled, and after the train had started, we two, who were absolute strangers to one another began to converse. Or, rather, I had a very distinct feeling, as I observed my fellow traveller, that he was possibly one whom I was to meet for a definite purpose, so I broke the silence with a remark that I hoped my snoring would not keep him from sleeping. "I do not feel sleepy anyway" he replied, I thought rather testily, but a moment or two later, he spoke again and said something jocular about being in good company, presumably referring to my clerical attire. I felt that he was not a happy man although desiring to give no sign of his cares. Two or three times I fancied I caught the sound of a smothered sigh as he pretended to be reading. I too was engaged with a book making notes, and meanwhile perceived that he was not really reading the several papers he handled from time to time. At last he laid them all aside with a very definite expression of being ill at ease. He busied himself with his other belongings for some minutes and then seeing that I had also closed my book he asked :

"Do you take this journey often?"

"Not very; are you frequently this way?"

"Yes! my home is up here and I go regularly to London, by day mostly. I do not like night travelling."

His accent had already proclaimed his northern birth, so that I was not surprised at his reply to my question.

I volunteered the statement that I was a good traveller and would probably be able to sleep quite well when the time came. This seemed to interest him and he presently asked a few further ordinary questions and I thought would subside into silence, but he seemed not to desire silence. I therefore thought it time to make a suggestion.

"After a light refreshment I propose to settle down about nine-thirty, what do you say?" I asked, but a shrug of his shoulders



was his only response. It was now about eight-thirty and we were rattling along at high speed. The night was brilliantly lit outside by the full moon which revealed glimpses of the famous country through which we were passing. I made a few remarks upon this but only a very passing interest was evinced. This I put down to his familiarity with it.

About nine o'clock he leaned forward and suggested that he would greatly appreciate it if I would allow him to ask me a few questions. I am afraid that I must have given evidence of being tired for he at once offered apology and withdrew his request. It was true that after a very strenuous time travelling and speaking I really was ready to sleep, but it was evident that my companion had something on his mind and wanted help. What if he were one of those whom I was to 'find.' Ah! an opportunity! I was now awake fully and urged him to go on.

"From what I have already gathered, sir, you believe God to be very real. Do you think that everyone could have that belief, or is it given to a few special people?"

I quoted "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

"That's good enough authority for believing 'Whosoever will' may become a believer and I have seen it operating," I continued.

It seemed opportune to relate a few experiences to this young man. I had been taking stock of him. I was sure that his question was only a means of temporising. He had something more than that to ask. He was in some trouble or real doubt. I wanted to help him and prayed for guidance.

He was a healthy looking athletic young man, well dressed and obviously well educated. His northern accent and deliberate speech revealed his nationality. He had an open honest countenance, but there lurked in the eyes a look of troubled perplexity. I knew he had a problem and possibly a heavy burden, and felt drawn to him in sympathetic desire to aid if permitted.

"Do you believe in inheritance?" he presently asked.

The question was fired at me so suddenly that it had for the moment but one inference for me. It made me smile.

"Why does my question cause you merriment? I was asking it seriously."

"Oh yes!" I replied, "I am sure you were, but it was un-



expected, and it reminded me of a curious incident in my experience. I once asked a crowd of East-end boys the meaning of that word 'inheritance.' I had used it in the course of my address unthinkingly.

"That was a big word," I said. "What do you think it means?"

"There was a good deal of head scratching and a long pause before any boy replied. But one lad timidly put up his hand venturing a definition.

"Well?"

"Please sir, 'ineritans,—wot you said,—is wot a bloke comes in for when 'is farver dies.' The poor laddie had got an idea of the meaning, but when I reflected upon what he had 'come in for' when his father died, I was full of deep pity for him. He was a ragged shoeless boy whose home I knew well. His father had died a drunkard's death."

"Tell me," my fellow traveller hastily asked with wide open eyes as if much depended upon my answer. "Tell me—do you know that boy still?"

Happily I could answer him in the affirmative.

"Yes, he has grown into a fine fellow. He is married and has now children of his own. But unfortunately he was wounded in the war and is heavily handicapped."

"Is he following in his father's footsteps in the matter of drink?"

"Thank God, no!" I replied. "He hates drink and does not hesitate to say so. But why do you ask so earnestly?"

"Because strangely enough, sir, you have touched upon the very matter which is greatly troubling me. May I open my heart to you in confidence?"

"Certainly, but you do not know me. I can only promise to honour your wishes in any matter in which you trust me."

He was looking steadfastly at me and I could perceive an eagerness to unburden himself and perhaps gain relief thereby.

But there was more in it than that. In the Father's inscrutable and unfailing wisdom we had been brought together in this strange way for a very definite purpose. The knowledge of this fact was growing upon me as we sat looking at each other while the train rushed along at sixty miles an hour through tunnels, over bridges with the steady rhythm which would ordinarily have lulled me to

sleep, but which now seemed to be musical. It accompanied in my consciousness familiar refrains. I was inwardly singing while awaiting his next utterance.

"Perhaps it is because you are a stranger to me that I am moved to seek your confidence. No one knows what I have endured, and I have been afraid that if I tried to explain to those who know me they would totally misunderstand. But I feel I must tell someone who can advise me, and I feel drawn to you, sir."

Again I looked carefully at him. There were no indications of wrong living or mental unfitness. As I have said he appeared to be a particularly bright and prepossessing young fellow, evidently from a good home, or at least a home where there was no poverty or lack of the good things of this world.

After another long pause he spoke in a quiet subdued tone and manner as if carefully weighing each word and its implications.

"My people are not poor although I cannot say they are wealthy, but I was sent away to school when very young, and only saw my parents and sisters at the usual holiday times. Then I went to Edinburgh and did well enough to be considered quite clever. But while at the earlier school I took a special interest in Scripture and religious subjects. This greatly pleased my mother but had the reverse effect upon my father. He seemed to resent my keenness in this direction and whenever possible discounted any report of progress. I asked my mother the reason for this, but never succeeded in gaining any information until one day after a school prize-giving occasion, when we were on the way home in the train my father shocked me by an expression which I will not repeat. I noticed my mother's pained features and my father's ill-temper and felt that there was some mystery which was beyond me at that time. I was also sure that whatever it was which caused my father's dislike of religion my mother did not share his views. That evening I had a still further shock. We lived in a big old house surrounded by its own grounds and some distance from its nearest neighbour. I had gone to bed and was wakened from sleep by a commotion on the stairs. There were sounds as of some heavy weight being carried awkwardly up from below. Mother's voice reached me urging someone not to make too much noise lest it should awaken 'the boy.' There were also groans—a man's groans. I was very much awake now and sprang out of bed imagining there had been an accident, I threw

open the door and asked what was the matter. I saw two men whom I recognized as neighbours carrying the helpless form of my father, and mother holding a lamp in her hand.

"What is it mother, dear?" I called out.

"Go back to bed at once," she commanded me. "I'll come and tell you directly. Father has become ill, but will soon be all well again. Go back to bed."

"But I had seen enough to reveal the true state of things—my father had been drinking. The other two men had also been drinking. It was the first knowledge I had of such a fact. I was horrified. I did not know then all the horror of it, nor do I even now know all the meaning of what my mother said that night. After a long time of waiting during which I was haunted by all manner of thoughts, I heard my mother approaching. I was only a boy but I wanted to help her. She had forbidden me to leave my room, so I must await her coming. She came and endeavoured to minimise the facts but I soon told her that I knew what was the matter—my father was drunk. I recall the bitter tears she shed, but that was the only time I saw them. But she said something to me that night which has haunted me liked a fiendish spirit ever since. It was doubtless intended as a warning but it is to me a dreadful fear. I was told that for three generations drink had cursed my father's family. His father and grandfather had brought sorrow and disaster to those who loved them and had died drunkards. It seemed my father was already doomed to the same fate. My mother had come to believe the taint was inherited. She held my hand in her own and amongst other things I remember always this: 'Sonnie I wish you had never been born.' She told me that father hated religion and would never willingly permit her to attend the kirk or to speak of prayer. 'But Sonnie I have prayed ever since you were born for two things for you. I have asked God to keep you from strong drink, and to break the power of the inheritance in you.' Three years later my mother died, I verily believe she died of a broken heart. My father died eight years ago—a drunkard. Always pressing in upon me there is the awful feeling that I may follow in the same way. I have tried all I know to forget it. I've given up several berths because there were conditions which seemed to compel me to drink. I have never been really intoxicated, but often the thought has presented itself that it was useless to resist because o

the inheritance. The taint was in my blood therefore I was fated. I've tried to believe there is a God. I've read good books on the subject. I've attended services in all manner of churches. When in London I go to certain places where I hear great preachers speak of Christ as if He were real, but to me their voices seem a mockery. I am now twenty-eight years of age. I've been without parents since I was twenty years of age. When they were taken—or at least when my father died, I went to live with my uncle's widow. Her husband—my father's brother—was also a heavy drinker and a great sufferer. They had one child a girl to whom I am deeply attached. After my uncle's death my aunt married again and a boy was born. This boy is six years my junior and is already disgracing his widowed mother and sister. He says he has inherited from his forbears the same family taint and acts as if he believes it. His stepsister, who, is as you see, my cousin, seems sometimes to agree with him although she detests the cause of his ruin. We are not engaged but are very fond of each other. It is a ghastly thought to me that we may also both be doomed to go the same way. I tell you sir that I am afraid of the future. Can you say anything to me which would relieve my mind? You have spoken of wonderful things during our conversation. Is there any way of escape from the power of inheritance and the taint of drink?"

Had he known my own experiences of the subject he would have known also how that question would be answered. He did not know the lessons which life had taught me in regard to his own problem nor the joy it now gave me to be able to offer counsel and guidance.

In the earlier part of our conversation I had told him of some incidents concerning the conversion of men I had known, and now I could see that these stories must have had a special bearing upon his own circumstances. Thus, I had innocently been preparing the way for more direct dealing.

"You tell me you have never been really intoxicated. Why is that?" I asked.

"I suppose because so far I have succeeded in keeping a check upon myself."

"Why did you not give way, if you are doomed to do so?"

"I do not want to do so."

"Thank God for that," I said. "Did you pray about it?"

"I did, but I am not conscious that it was of any use. I may fail one of these days and then what is to happen. Beside although I said prayers I do not realise that God hears them, nor if there is a God."

"Why do you not know?"

To this question he seemed unable to find a reply. So I proceeded with a further statement which I hoped would help him.

"I am sure you had a great affection for your mother, and cannot believe that when her body was laid in the ground she was for ever done with. You believe, though you cannot understand it at present, that she is still existing somewhere. You often feel that she is near you and that the prayer of which she told you is still being uttered in the same way. If she still exists her love for you will still mean that her great desire is to protect you from the curse of your father's sin. That is probably why you have not yet yielded to the subtle temptation to drink heavily. Prayer is a marvellous thing. At this moment, in answer to prayer, I am being led to say these things to you. Your mother's prayer and mine are here and now being answered. But there is one thing more. In order to make you what you can be by the grace of God, it is needful that you should give yourself wholly up to Him. As really as I am here talking with you in this railway carriage Christ is here. You have never seen Him with your physical sight, but then neither have you ever seen me with your eyes.

"What exactly does that mean?" he asked quietly.

"It means exactly what I said. You have never seen me because I am a spirit. You can see this physical house in which I live—my body—but myself you cannot see. I am bigger than my body. I can live altogether away from my body. At this moment I am in a street in London listening to a man I know. He is saying:

"Once I was blind, but now I can see  
The Light of the World is Jesus."

He was a drunkard, chained hand and foot by strong drink until one day when we kneeled together in the street and he asked Christ to deliver him from his sin. From that hour he has touched no drink and has helped many another to do the same. I am also on board a ship I know in a distant port with a chief officer who is

smilingly happy as he tells me he is being 'kept by the power of Jesus' from all manner of sins into which he once fell frequently. The spirit of a man is the man. 'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.' So Christ the great Spirit is here and able to take away all those fears. More, if there is what you have called 'taint' or inherited tendency, He who is Almighty can take it right away:

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin  
And sets the prisoner free.  
His blood can make the foulest clean,  
His blood avails for me."

He was trembling with some suppressed excitement. He moved his lips as if to speak. No words came. I laid my hand upon his hand and said no word for a moment or two. Then he looked up and said "Will you pray for me now?"

In that rolling, swaying speeding train we bowed together and after a few sentences of intercession, I heard him say the words after me "Create within me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me."

Then voluntarily: "God be merciful to me a sinner—for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

As we looked up I was surprised to see another form. The noise of the train had prevented us from hearing the arrival of the steward. He too, was kneeling by the seat and as we rose together, he said:

"I hope you'll pardon me sir, but I couldn't help joining in. Such a thing has not happened before since I've been aboard this train. I'm finishing up as a relief to-night, but God has just sent you along in time. He knew I wanted His special help to-night, and I'm ever so glad He let me hear what you were saying. I'm a converted man, but was being dreadfully tempted. Now I shall not fail Him. God bless you both. I'll bring you some coffee along in a few minutes." He was gone.

We looked at one another, my young friend and I. He astonished, I very happy.

"That's how it works"—I said. "Isn't it wonderful?"

The lad's face was a study.

"What can I say to you sir?" he asked.

"Say it all to Him," I replied. "Now we'll just have our coffee, disrobe somewhat, turn in, and as it's getting on for



midnight we'll have a few hours' sleep." The bunks were turned down, we had our coffee, and after getting between the sheets I remember no more until I awoke to find it daybreak. My friend was still sleeping soundly. Partially dressing, I crept away to wash and shave. When I returned the lad was on his knees. He arose as I entered.

"Padre—you've been sent to find me on this train, and I'm ever so grateful. I feel happier than I ever remember. I believe all the fear has gone. I'm giving myself to Christ for always, I love Him because He first loved me."

We shook hands, and I had a great thrill of joy as I looked at his young earnest face. I prayed he might be kept.

During the meal which followed I learned a good deal more of his manner of life, his vocation, and his family—and must respect his confidences. But there was no doubt that a man had been found for Christ in that unanticipated way.

When my friend reads this in his faraway home in the tropics he will know that his story has been told so that another who may be reading it, and whose need is similar, may also seek the same Lord Who is able to save and able to keep. He will recall that at Euston Station that morning, we three, the steward and ourselves, hummed together as we shook hands in a sort of triangle, "Auld Lang Syne" and whispered "God be with you till we meet again."

We have never met again on earth and may not do so, for thousands of miles separate us—England—Johannesburg—British Columbia—but the morning will bring greater revelations of the mighty power of Jesus to transform and use those who were 'dead in trespasses and in sins.' If the photographs I have seen and the letters I have read may be taken as witness, all fear of the entail has been dissipated, and the rising generation will know nothing of the "sin which did so easily beset." God grant it may be so. He has made great promises to those who love Him and He keeps these promises to the full. Nay, His gracious gifts are beyond all that we conceive. He amazes us by His wonder-working power, and we stand still in the awe and wonder of it.

I had a letter one day from a member of this man's family desiring an interview, and during that talk I learned much that is wonderful. From away across the seas there had been related in a series of letters something of the story I have here written—and



more. These letters had been used by God in blessing several persons, chiefly it seemed this relative whose own life had been severely hindered by the drink curse, which seemed to have such a terrible effect upon this particular family, as alas, it has had on thousands of others. My visitor is the leader of a large and well attended Sabbath School and one of his teachers had brought him a book asking if he had read it. The author's name was already known to him but he had not seen nor read the book before. Now he had done so and felt he must see the author. Until reading he had been a moderate drinker, not realizing the position he was in with regard to the many young folk in his charge week by week. He had prayed earnestly to be directed as to his course. He was a business man and met many with whom he drank. He had begun to carefully enquire among the young folk in the school concerning their homes, and the result of his enquiries had alarmed him. He felt convicted and was now convinced that he must leave alone altogether that which had ruined so many homes and lives. He has three children of his own.

When he had heard from me some of the things referred to in his relative's letters, I could see that the same old idea had been possessing him—had sometimes haunted him.

He asked : " Do you think that reference ' Unto the third and fourth generation ' is still operative ? "

I smiled at his question.

" Why do you smile ? I am really very serious about it. "

" So am I, but I can afford to smile because I know the secret which can break the entail. "

" You mean faith in Christ ? "

" Yes, but I put it in another way ; in one word—Love. "

I could also perceive that he was mentally examining the inferences of that reply, but was not arriving at the vital conclusion. So I helped him by the all important question :

" Do you really love Christ ? " with an emphasis on the fourth word.

He hesitated, as all of us have done.

Then very quietly, humbly, he confessed : " Not with all my heart and soul and strength and mind. "

" There is the secret. If we love Him we cannot do anything which He would not have us do. "

" That's it, " he replied. " I see that, and it is because I have

not realized until now that first my love for Christ—and then my love for my children must be supreme that I have selfishly clung to a habit which might be their spiritual ruin. I ought to have seen that earlier. It will be done, for I do love Christ and I do love my fellow men for His sake.”

I expect my friend is in for some criticism when he meets those who differ, even within his own family circle, but I’m sure he will win and in days to come his children will prove that ‘he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God’ and will praise God for a father’s example.

How often do I hear in my daily work the lamentable statement that the habit of drinking which has brought degradation was learned in the home. Praise God Love can change all that.

There is great need just now for Christians everywhere to examine their position with regard to the drink traffic. The ‘trade’ is spending many millions upon an organised effort to educate the youth of England to become ‘beer-minded.’ Everywhere they are posting upon our hoardings cleverly designed and attractive posters, some of them really beautiful works of art, some of them so obviously silly that one wonders who could be deceived by them. But apparently they are to some extent proving successful if the published statistics reveal the truth. The number of police prosecutions for drunkenness during 1935 has risen to the level of some years ago when we were resolved to improve matters. United efforts on the part of all concerned did considerably reduce the excessive drinking and we were hopeful that this hindrance to the Work of God was being removed. Now we are rapidly sliding backward again and are upon that treacherous slope which ends in misery and degradation.

The trade battens upon credulity, ignorance, superstition and vicious habits, and the only weapon with which we can hope to successfully oppose them is the power of the Love that Lifts.

## FOUR

*"These things I command you, that ye love one another."*

John xv, 17.

THE greater part of my life seems to have been lived amidst crowds. Crowded workshops, crowded streets, crowded vehicles, crowded market places. It has seemed to me to be an experience which I could not avoid. I love the great open spaces—the sea—the moors, the countryside, but crowds of men and women attract me, not because I love crowds, but for the same reason I think that my Master sought them. I have been in friendly welcoming crowds, and in dangerously hostile crowds, even as He was in the days of His earthly ministry. In some humble way it has been also my privilege to understand something of His mind as he viewed the crowds in Palestine. His compassion and His love even for His enemies are too wonderful for us to fully comprehend, but His servants cannot surely look to-day upon the surging humanity in our great centres without longing to save them from the aimless drifting or the fruitless haste which is everywhere evidenced. And it is in such throngs that men get lost as children who have strayed from their parents' side. Thank God it is also possible to find even in such concourses those whom Christ has followed day and night, year after year, seeking, seeking until He find.

I have seen and spoken to terribly lonely souls in the midst of teeming throngs of other human beings. The crowded City street can be the most lonely spot for some souls.

On certain Sunday afternoons in that densely packed area within a half-mile square around Aldgate we used to search among the crowds for lonely folk, and as it grew dusk we would see them furtively making for some place of shelter for the night. From among them we found many a lost sheep and gathered such into a warmer and more welcome shelter.

On one Sunday afternoon we had in our gathering a man who bore all the marks of a life of sin and degradation. His face was distorted and repellent. He looked just what he was—one of life's awful wrecks. There were many others somewhat similar,

but his appearance fixed our attention, and we decided that after the service we would endeavour to make an appeal to his better nature, if, please God, there were still some of it approachable.

But it fell out different from our plan. This man had already been appealed to by One greater than ourselves.

"May I speak to you sir?" asked someone at my elbow.

I turned to find this very man making the request.

"Certainly, what can I do for you?"

"I want to give myself to Jesus Christ."

"What makes you say that?"

"Because you said this afternoon that Jesus wants the worst man and can save the worst man,—and that's me."

I make humble confession that his earnestness was a reproach to me. I indeed had said the words he quoted, doubtless inspired to do so, but their power I had scarcely gauged. I knew they were true words, but to see them immediately effective was to be reminded of my own lack of faith. Yet I had so often seen such marvellous things happen that I should be expecting. However, there was one who pleaded guilty to being the worst man in that weird assembly. "So He can if you will allow Him. He can make you a new creation. Let us ask Him here and now." We kneeled together and he poured out his broken petition. In it he told the Lord much of his sad story in a way I cannot recount, but with a simplicity which in such a man seemed incongruous. He had been responsible for his mother's death, so he said, although the law of the land could not arraign him for it. He had illtreated his father, and even as we talked of it there was a special police instruction to arrest him if he was seen in the vicinity of his father's dwelling. All this and much more he included in his prayer for forgiveness.

He told me how he had been living. For the last two years he had been casually employed by a Jew, who sent him down each morning with an old horse and cart to Wapping Gas Works to obtain coke. This he hawked round the streets selling it in 'haporths and pennorths.'

"Lucky if I ever sold a sack," he said. And knowing the character of the neighbourhood I quite understood what he meant. Then at the close of day he received the sum of sixpence and the privilege of sleeping in the stable with the 'horse.' His description of this animal and of his employer was given in such a way

that I could scarcely keep countenance. But to him it was a serious statement of facts.

Such a life had left its mark upon him in many ways, but such is the power of God's Spirit that even this man was 'born anew.' We had of course to find him other employment and this was no easy matter. It was, however, accomplished.

A week or two later I had a call from his father.

"I hear my son has been to see you," he began before I had time even to ask his name.

"Yes! And who might your son be?"

His vivid description left no doubt as to the identity. That face could hardly be mistaken—the scars—the eyes—described perfectly.

"Well?"

"Sir, I've come to warn you. He'll deceive you and let you down. Promise anything he will,—anything. He has been a scoundrel to us, and killed his poor mother with his cruel ways. Can't tell you all his wickedness. Robbed us of everything he could lay his thieving fingers on he did. Broke into the house when his mother was dying and stole the only money we had. Broke my shoulder he did as I tried to stop him, and his mother gasping her last. Oh, he's a beast. Not a spark of good in him there aint. He's my son, my flesh and blood, but there's no good in him. Now I've warned you, sir. Don't have anything to do with him, or he'll——"

The old man paused for breath. He had rattled on in an excited manner. Someone had told him of the son's profession of repentance, and I gathered that E—— had often promised to amend his ways. For a few days appearing to keep his promise, only to break out in some fresh form of devilry.

From all that I heard at this interview I could not but sympathize with the father's point of view. It was apparently most reasonable. All the evidence of years supported it. No one expected any amendment now, least of all the father, whose patience was entirely exhausted, and in whose heart all natural affection seemed almost dead. I say 'seemed' for later events proved the truth of the lines:

"Touched by a loving hand,  
Wakened by kindness.  
Chords that were broken  
Will vibrate once more."

The father was told gently that we thought he was mistaken. There *was* some good in his son's heart which the power of God could still bring to light and life. He sadly shook his head incredulously and repeated that having warned me of the risks we ran in encouraging E—— about the premises he would wash his hands of the business and leave us to find out for ourselves that he was right. "There's not a spark of good in him," and with this he departed.

Incidentally the opportunity was taken to tell the older man something which did him good. A few seeds were sown during our conversation which were destined to bring forth a rich harvest in the near future.

E—— worked steadily at his new job week by week we observed a very real change taking place in him. Quietly but eagerly he sought opportunities to prove his discipleship. He was very ignorant of the Scriptures, but was now diligently overtaking the lack. It was pleasing to see him whenever he could get another to read with him. He began to search the Book for himself and frequently brought me his problems. He was much in love with certain parts of the New Testament, but was very greatly chastened whenever the subject of honouring one's parents was mentioned. In committing to memory the Commandments I observed that whenever he repeated the Fifth he would pause sadly, and then continue with an effort and an emphasis. He had great difficulty in overcoming the very real fear which the reading of Exodus xxi, 17, brought.

"I do not deserve to live. The punishment mentioned there is what I should get," he would say.

It was only when I pointed out to him the later verse in that chapter, the 24th, and then read him our Lord's own words thereon that he was comforted.

Ten months passed. Then he came to me one day with a new expression on his face. He was excited and buoyant, but hesitant. I knew he had some matter he wanted to speak about so I helped him to begin. After a few commonplace and disjointed remarks I said :

"Now, old chap, there's something on your mind. What's it all about ?"

What a change there really was in this man. The old haunted look had disappeared, the head was held erect, the speech was

becoming pleasant, the repellent manner had given place to a gentler bearing, he was a 'new creature.'

He began—"I've been thinking what a lot I owe my dad."

"Indeed you do, but why do you speak like that about it?"

"Well, you see, I've been at my job forty weeks. And"—suddenly diving his hand in his trouser pocket he brought out something wrapped in one of our hymn sheets. Unfolding it carefully he produced two golden sovereigns.

"This is the first money I've ever saved in my life, and I've been thinking my dear old dad should have it."

"No good in him"—Why here was the beginning of those fruits of His Spirit which men had supposed impossible.

"I've put by a shilling a week and here it is. I'd like my dad to have that; will you please give it to him?"

"No!" I replied. "I will not." He looked disappointed, but I went on: "You will take it to him yourself."

He shook his head. "I'm not allowed near that street."

That used to be true I well knew, but things were changed, and I had taken several opportunities to tell the police who had special instructions concerning E—— and his doings.

"I'll come back with you, and your dad will get a great surprise."

So off we set. When near the place I deemed it advisable to suggest that I should go on ahead and break the ice, so to speak. E—— agreed.

His father was sweeping out the little eating house by which he made his living.

He was surprised to see me and I thought looked a little fearful. But as I was smiling at him as I said "Good morning," he recovered from his obvious concern.

"Well, have you seen your boy lately?"

"No! I haven't, and I don't want. I'm at peace as long as he stops away. Where is he? In gaol?"

"No," I replied. "As I told you, he is converted."

"He's what? Converted? Believe it when I see it, not before."

"So you shall then." I went outside and called E—— along. When he came up to where his father stood, there was a challenging look in the old man's face, met by a pained expression in the boy's. They just stood looking at one another for several seconds, until I said:



"Now then, E——, tell your father what you have come for and just what you told me."

"Dad," he began, in a very subdued voice and manner, and with his eyes averted, "I've been a very bad son to you. I've been all wrong, but now I've got Jesus in my heart, He's changing everything. He is indeed, Dad, and since I was converted, I've worked ever so hard to save a bit to help you, Dad. Here it is; take it, it's yours."

The old man said not a word he was too surprised.

The lad had thrust the two coins into his father's passive hands, where they were a moment later gazed at in a bewildered way. The father's eyes looked suspiciously like overflowing. The boy went on, "Forgive me, Dad. I can't ask Mum, she's gone, but the Lord has forgiven me and you must, please. I want——"

Then I left them to sort it all out. That evening E—— came along to see me, bringing the assurance of his father's forgiveness. It had apparently taken the old gentleman a long time to understand what had happened to his boy in whom he had reckoned 'there was no good.'

E—— had many another battle yet to fight. Like Andrew's brother, he failed sometimes, but won through and became, to use his own designation, 'a smiler in' at all our public services. In all kinds of weather he would search the streets to 'smile in' some of his own kind and many he brought along to their own awakening.

His enthusiasm for his new Master sometimes exceeded discretion. On one occasion a breathless boy came to bring me to help the 'Smiler' because he was going to be 'done in' as the boy put it. Together we hurried round to the place indicated. In one of the dark squares there was a place known as 'The German Oak Club.' Outside these premises there was a group of struggling men who had someone down on the ground. My police whistle was sounded and I rushed to help E—— who was being held down because in one hand he held a big clasp knife with its blade open. The crowd scattered and the chief villains bolted. Poor E—— had a dreadfully mangled face and was literally foaming with anger. Explanations had to wait until we had bathed him and got him quieter. Then I discovered that in his attempts to 'convert' one of the members of this so-called Club, he had unwittingly used words which caused bitter resentment and this

had led to the fight which might have ended in a tragedy. The knife was apparently not drawn in self defence, but belonged to one of the gang from whom E—— had fortunately snatched it just in time. His description of the man from whom he took it was expressed in the language of his unregenerate days. For this his contrition was most pitiful to behold. He had let Jesus down although it was in defending His Name that the trouble was caused. He had yet to learn the meaning of Christ's answer to Peter when he proposed to 'smite' the Saviour's persecutors.

It was many days before E—— could hold up his head again, so deeply did he feel his humiliation. The pain of his wounds seemed to trouble him little, but he suffered bitterly by the reflection that he had 'let Jesus down.'

The genuine character of this man's conversion was evidenced by a miraculous change of manner. In the place of the old coarse and ugly cruelty there were developing a gentleness and a graciousness most beautiful to behold. It was a marvel to all who knew him. He gave most unselfish devotion to those who had been the means of finding him, and a simple generosity displaced the utterly selfish and degraded spirit he formerly displayed. He witnessed with such earnest enthusiasm among his old pals that several of them were brought to Christ in remarkable ways.

I know that he was in the crowd that day when the incidents occurred which are related in Chapter Seven of "Finding Men for Christ," and that like a faithful bodyguard he followed me from the meeting to the restaurant where I took my client, 'in case he might be wanted.' That he patiently waited outside and prayed for me that I might 'convert that chap,' as he put it.

He was exuberant when I told him something of the results of the conversations and the procedure of that day, and he told me that some of the crowd thought he was 'out of his mind' when he laughed and clapped his hands at the discomfiture of the orator who had so boastfully derided God.

E—— is still going well and his happy little home in the same locality is evidence enough that Love wins when all the legal powers of modern civilization miss the mark and can provide no substitute for the way of God.

## FIVE

*"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*—John xiii, 35.

THE Sunday of which I now write had been a very busy day, and tired out with the heavy demands of several marches and indoor services followed by a long wrestle with all manner of evil influences for a man's decision for Christ, we were at last retiring. It was somewhere about midnight.

Our bedrooms were on the top floor of an old set of premises in a narrow Whitechapel alley. The public services had been held in a large hall seating about 800 persons. This was surrounded by rooms and corridors of a most intricate kind. Our windows overlooked the dark alleyway. To reach these rooms necessitated the negotiation of several winding stairways and long badly lit passages.

The main entrance was closed and barred for the night, and our private door was remote from the dwelling apartments.

We had possessed knockers and doorbells, but the cost of repeated replacements had become so heavy that now any late caller had to kick upon the door to gain attention.

We were disrobing wearily when there reached us the sound of a vigorous kicking at the door downstairs. I threw up the window to discover who it might be. We had all sorts of callers. There stood in the dimly lit alley a man's figure and when I called to ask what he wanted this dialogue ensued.

"What is it?"

"I want ter see the parson."

"What do you want him for?"

"I want ter see him."

"Well! here he is; what do you want?"

"It's somethink pertickler, please come down."

It seemed the man really wanted something urgently, so redressing I made my way to the aforesaid private door which I opened cautiously, keeping the safety chain still up.

"What is it you want, my friend?" I asked once again.

"I want ter come in and speak to yer."

"Do please tell me what it is that you want. Is any one ill?"

I could get nothing from him except that he wanted to be a 'better man.'

That decided me to let him in and accept all risks.

"Then wait a few moments while I get a light."

I was carrying only a candlestick and had to turn on the gas and light it at the end of the passage which I have already described as long, narrow, and badly lit,—and it was Whitechapel!

As he entered at my bidding, I took stock of him carefully. He was a tall, powerfully built man with a determined expression which was anything but prepossessing.

"Well now, what can I do for you?" I asked.

"Don't yer remember me, sir?"

I could not recall ever having seen him before. His face was one I should have easily remembered.

"I'm a burglar."

"Then your place is outside; what do you want!"

"Leastways, I was a burglar. I was in the church to-night, and shouted out to yer while yer were preachin'.

Then I recalled an incident which I had not associated with this visitor. It was no unusual thing to have interruptions during our services. But this evening there had been a rather new form of interruption.

I had reached a point in the address at which, to illustrate my appeal I had quoted the sad circumstances of a home in Wapping where one of our members lay dying, his wife having died the day before. Apparently this reference must have forcefully affected this man, for just as the people were listening intently to the story, a voice in loud eager tones called out: "Is that yarn true, guv'nor? If that's true, I'll give yer arf a dollar fer the kids!" A tall man was standing under the gallery at the back looking very excited and overwrought. The stewards had quietened him, the service was continued, and, in the pressure of other matters I had forgotten the affair. Now here was the interrupter.

"I've come ter see if that there yarn is true."

"Of course it is true; but why does it interest you so?" I asked.

He was looking queerly at me and did not reply at once. I wondered what was happening next. He was a big fellow. He

might be mental. I confess to feeling some anxiety at the situation although I did not allow that to be observed. We were out of earshot and in a dimly lit narrow passageway where anything might happen unheard.

My momentary fears were soon at rest, however, for he continued in an undertone as he dropped his eyes which had been gazing intently at me. "Then if that yarn is true I ought to be a better man—that's all. But it wants a lot er swallerin'."

I tried to convince him that the story I had told was not only perfectly true, but even more tragic and wonderful than I had yet reported. He was now staring blankly at me again, as if entranced by the recital.

Feeling that here was a soul to be won, I continued to urge him to believe not only my story, but the truth which it illustrated—that Christ could save any man, however bad he may be, if only His pardon were sought and His Word believed.

He was still unconvinced and told me so.

At length I made the proposition that I should take him to see the sick man.

He immediately jumped at the idea.

I was in for a long and lonely walk with a self-confessed very bad man—a strong and rather brutal looking burglar.

"Then wait here a few moments," I said.

It was now long past midnight. I went up to the top of the building again, told my wife I was going down to Wapping with a burglar, and prepared for the journey.

It was not the first strange announcement I had made to my homefolk but I had better not report here what was said to me on this occasion because it was really only concern for my physical wellbeing.

I confess that my police whistle did not leave my hand nor my coat pocket during that journey in such strange company down Nightingale Lane toward Wapping Old Stairs. We reached the first bridge which spans the Docks near the river. Here something happened. It was a very dark night, and there was little conversation between us except that I observed that my companion walked very close to my side and whenever we passed a lamp he would say enquiringly—"Then it's true, guv'nor?"

"Yes! Come along and you shall see," I each time replied.

Suddenly out of the dark distance there came rushing past us

a figure of a young girl. She had passed swiftly but apparently identified me for I heard immediately my name called.

"Oh, Mr. Dempster, come quickly, dad is going fast and he asks for you. I was coming for you."

My companion's face was a study. In any case I should have been called out that night as upon many another.

"Come along," I urged my friend as with hastened pace we continued to No. — Dundee Street.

The street door was slightly open, and as there was no passage way the door opened directly into the room, a weird sight met our view. My tall burglar stood transfixed, but I quietly pulled him into the house. A tiny room about eight or nine feet square, lit by one dim gas light with a broken mantle in its flame. On our left hand in the corner by the window stood a coffin on end. In the coffin the dead body of a woman; the wife of the man who now lay dying on a rough couch made up on several boxes covered with a few tattered blankets and the man's clothing. Around the two sides of the corner behind the coffin a white sheet with small crosses of black tape pinned to it. In front of the coffin another old box upon which were two candles, and an old saucer containing snuff.

The woman had been a Roman Catholic and her friends had thus shewn their respect. How the candles had been purchased is part of another interesting story.

But the man was not of the same religious creed. Until a year ago he was of no faith at all. Like thousands of his neighbours he had lived without acknowledging God. Indeed in spite of the nominal adherence of the woman to the Roman Church she too had lived a godless life and both of them were frequently drunk—whenever sufficient liquor was obtainable. Quarrels were the inevitable result, and the children were often driven into the street shrieking with fear. I had several times intervened to prevent fighting, mostly, I am bound to confess, provoked by the woman who seemed to lose her head completely when under the influence of strong drink. The man was of the type who became less voluble in drink and wanted only to be let alone. Not so his partner. Under some pretext she would attack and argue, challenging him to dare lay a finger upon her when as a matter of truth he never did. The fights were of her making, and he was always on the defensive. His face had often been marked by her

fists or by some weapon used by her. Yet in his sober moments he would tell me that after all he had led her into drinking habits and he supposed he must now pay the penalty.

Poor souls ! What was life to them under such conditions ? And what was home to the three girls who called them mother and father ? It was after one such bout, when I had actually wrestled with them for over an hour, while the inquisitive and ignorant neighbours crowded round the windows and doorway, that we came to the wonderful moment of B's conversion. That too is another story. The man was miraculously changed and his wife was steadily improving when the fatal sickness overtook her.

Now she was dead and in a few hours her husband would also be called hence.

By the side of the dying man kneeled the two younger girls, so soon to be orphaned, weeping bitterly, and looking most pitiable objects.

The man moved slightly and for a moment his lips formed a faint smile of welcome. I do not think he even saw the tall man. But the latter recovering his speech said hoarsely : " Then it's true ! My God ! it's true ! "

He thrust a coin into the hand of one of the girls, kissed her head as it was bowed upon her father's hand and then hastened out into the darkness of the night.

My duty was by the side of the father and children. It was a scene and an experience to be for ever remembered.

Gradually release came to the sufferer, and one had then to carry out duties which need not be recounted.

When at last all that was possible had been arranged and the children comforted as far as such conditions would permit, I at last was free to go home.

It must have been about four o'clock in the morning when I stepped out into the welcome open air.

There on the kerbstone sat the burglar as apparently he had been sitting the whole time I was in the room. He must have heard all that had been said. As I came toward him he was covering his face with his hands and calling upon God.

" My God ! " he said, looking up at me. " You said he was a good man. What sort of a God is He to take a man like that and leave such a beast as me ? "



Ah ! here was a disciple to be found. This was for me an easy question to answer. It was my opening.

Quickly I responded : " He is a Wonderful God, and it is because He is a God of Wonderful Mercy that you are spared ! Don't you see He is giving you another opportunity ? "

He stared up at me.

" Suppose it had been me," and his big frame shook with dread at the reflection.

I urged him to come along with me, and during that slow walk back along the dock side up Nightingale Lane there transpired the wonderful change we call Conversion. Unfolding by the aid of God's Spirit, His plan of redemption, telling in simple terms the way of repentance, faith and acceptance, I rejoiced in the consciousness that this soul accompanying me under such strange circumstances was being ' born anew.' By the time we reached the main entrance to the great London Docks he was eagerly saying again and again : " I will ! I will ! I will ! God forgive me, I will ! "

" Then kneel here and tell Him so," I urged.

A great stone boulder stood at the entrance of the docks, placed there to keep the heavy waggons off the pavement. That stone was that night an altar. There we both kneeled and I heard that man pour out his soul in contrition to His Maker. He told Him in childlike fashion of his transgressions which were many and awful. He pleaded for mercy and received pardon and peace.

How do I know ?

Let me finish the story.

While we were kneeling there, I heard footsteps approaching us and turning for a moment for a momentary glance, saw, as I supposed, two policemen. They never reached us. For some reason they stopped and turned away. I can only presume that seeing my hat upon the ground and possibly hearing the prayer, perhaps recognizing myself—I know not,—at any rate, they did not interrupt.

Often have I wondered what those two policemen thought. Often wondered if I shall ever hear of the incident—if that event brought to their remembrance forgotten promises or professions, as in other instances I may record such things happened.

Another point of view is also that if they had known how near they were to meeting one for whom warrants were issued, they

would have been compelled to arrest him there and then. But they were somehow prevented. By Whom and Why?

Presently we were both standing shaking hands and almost embracing. What a sight for scoffers and critics. Also what a sight for those of whom it is said "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth!"

We made for home. He stepping out as if he had shed a heavy burden. I forgetting the physical weariness of the night's tasks and rejoicing in the 'finding' of a man.

He was put safely to bed, but when I went to see him after a few hours' rest, I found he had not slept.

He was a changed person. During the conversation before we had started out upon our momentous journey to Wapping I had taken close observations of the man. It was only too evident that he had lived a life of crime. He was obviously an outcast. He bore all the marks of his kind. Features once attractive had been coarsened by his manner of life and his companionship with the profligate and lewd. The facial expression so well known to those who are familiar with habitual criminals was there plainly enough. The furtive manner which betrays them so often to the trained eye of the police experts, and the little tricks of speech and hands belonging to 'inside' told their tale.

But now—remarkable changes had taken place. The man was healed. I will not say all the above-mentioned marks had gone. They had not. Sin leaves a scar. But there was a different tone in his voice. There was a softer, steadier look in his eyes. There was a gentler demeanour. He was agitated, but not in the same way as previously. He was patiently waiting to tell me of his reflections during those few sleepless hours. He had come to himself, and he had gone to his Father. Life's values had undergone a great change. He was no longer a fugitive fleeing from justice.

Said he, as soon as I had greeted him: "If I am to be a disciple I must go to the police station and give myself up—mustn't I?"

Here was a terrible proposition and a great dilemma.

After a few moments' pause to properly weigh the matter, during which pause those grey eyes of his seemed to be looking into my very soul, I replied: "Yes! I suppose you must, but first of all I will go to the police and see those there whom I know and can trust."

We talked that matter out over breakfast and it was decided to follow this plan.

He was indeed a bad lot. His record was an awful one. As he recounted the crimes committed, I noticed again and again evidences of an emotion he tried vainly to hide. Another thing I noticed also was that he never once laid any blame upon others, although from the listener's point of view, I felt that sometimes he was more of a tool than a felon. Guilty indeed he was, but there was no attempt to diminish his own sins by hiding behind the promptings and temptings of others. Deep and real contrition was revealed, along with many expressions of regret for the injury he had caused to those whose goods he had stolen and whose property he had damaged.

I visited Leman Street police station that morning. The Sub-Divisional Inspector was a friend of mine. Along with him in the office was also the Superintendent and another Inspector, a very fine Christian man, and when I related the purport of my visit, they together exclaimed: "Have you got that man there? Then we'll have him in no time."

"You will," I replied, "for he's coming to you and I am bringing him."

Even my Christian friend Inspector E—— said: "We must not leave anything to chance, he must be arrested."

They were persuaded to allow me to bring him along, although I always feel that at the same time they despatched officers to see that he did not change his mind en route.

To the Superintendent I told my part of the story and D—— was put in the lock-up to await appearance before the magistrate. He was committed for trial and it looked very black against him. Meanwhile it transpired that a way was opened for me to see those who were persuaded to take a merciful view and by that course his sentence was undoubtedly shorter than it might otherwise have been.

He took the verdict bravely, volunteering information which proved valuable in the recovery of certain goods which were restored to their rightful owners, but, I noticed, was most careful not to incriminate others. Later on he expressed very great delight at the recovery of the stolen goods. When I visited him in prison I was able again to secure him certain conditions which he might otherwise never have had, and this brought him to the

notice of prominent officials who trusted him with certain duties. In this way I learned later he was able to be a friend to others less fortunate, and won the appreciation of men whose hearts were supposed to be incapable of such feelings. He was of great assistance to the authorities and prison officials. He discovered that he had a very musical voice. But not until his discharge did I learn what this gift would mean.

The day he was set free, having earned his full measure of remissions by good conduct he came straight to me.

What a change had come to him. He was hardly to be recognized as the same man. Here was a well set up fellow whom no one would associate with his former self.

His first greetings over, he rather startled me by saying :

"Guv'nor, I've got a new idea—lend us a shilling."

That was not a new idea. Many a shilling had been requested thus, but as I jokingly told him so, I had no hesitation in producing the required coin.

"Well, what is your new idea?"

"You wait and see, sir. I'll be back again soon."

In a little while he returned with a small brown paper parcel.

"I've been up the Lane," said he.

I knew what he meant by that. Petticoat Lane nearby was the place, and still is where vendors of all kinds of articles sell their wares to two kinds of customers—the knowing and the innocent ; the wholesale and the retail. The former can buy at a price which permits the re-selling to be profitable, and certain goods are obtainable only there by this class of customer.

He had evidently purchased at wholesale prices some goods not yet revealed to me.

"I want a piece of wood so big—and a piece of thick string."

These were obtained, and with them he suspended from his shoulders a sort of platform tray in front about waist high.

Upon this he displayed from his mysterious parcel some collar studs, shoe laces, and some sheets of printed songs.

"I'm going into business, and I want you to come and see how it works."

He spoke almost with a childish joy ; as if he were about to have a boyish escapade or play a prank. But he was really serious. "You'll not sell if I come with you," I objected.

"You'll not sell," he replied with a shrug and a grin.

"Come and see,

With some reluctance, and yet with a desire to discover how he would proceed, I went out with him. I also remembered that he had no pedlar's licence, but I did not yet mention it.

Nearby was a well known public house—The Brown Bear—one of a dozen within a few yards, and when we reached it he bade me stand across the road in the shadow of a railway arch and watch.

I kept out of sight but stood where I could observe all that happened.

Standing outside the swing doors of the pub., he began to sing.

I was astonished to hear above the din of passing vehicles and overhead trains a lovely tenor voice singing "Annie Laurie."

A crowd assembled. Then he followed with another tenor song, "When other Lips." Still more people gathered—possibly fifty or so. His next song was "Jesu, Lover of my Soul," sung with great expression. He had them all off by memory and note perfect. But a climax was reached when like a bird he sang :

"Rock of ages cleft for me  
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Right through the hymn he sang with intense feeling, and then he disappeared into the public house bar.

As the crowd dispersed, I saw women wiping their tearful eyes furtively and men wore a subdued look seldom seen in those parts.

In a few minutes he was out again, striding swiftly across the road, his face aglow.

"Some songs outside, a sermon to the blokes inside, and fourpence. Will that do?"

Would it do? I was profoundly impressed. He was to do more by such a method than any amount of organized evangelistic efforts could achieve. I concluded that he must have rehearsed that scene over and over again while in prison. He had prayed and planned under the guidance of that great Spirit who had separated him from the old sinful past. In imagination I saw him smiling in anticipation at the surprise he would give me when the great day of release came.

His anticipations were realized for I was surprised, and delighted at the evidence of his miraculous transformation.

I told him so. "Go on with that good work," I urged. "I

could not do that, but you can, and may God bless you." For years he did that and for aught I know to the contrary is still doing it. At any rate, some five years after the event, one of our lady workers, whose home was then in mid-Kent, saw our friend giving his testimony in the market square near where she was spending her holiday, and he had in addition to his vocal powers acquired a violin which he used to great advantage.

I am not at all pretending to explain by what psychological process this man's life and outlook were so marvellously changed, for I have a fear that in giving time and consideration to such speculations or enquiries we are often diverted from the far more important question "how can I find someone else for Jesus?"

"How can these things be?" asked one of the Lord in the days of His flesh. Surely His reply to that question would be the same now as then.

"They who trust Him wholly,  
Find Him wholly true."

The diversity of God's operations are past our understanding, and while it may be quite human and natural to desire to comprehend the plans of God, we discover much more about them by our willingness simply to do His will as He reveals it to us hour by hour than by any academic enquiry.

I am convinced that if we Christians would but follow what we call 'impulses' which come to us, knowing as we surely do that they are in line with His teaching, marvellous results altogether beyond our foresight would follow.

The fact is that we do not follow these promptings because what we call our love for God is unworthy the name we give it. If we loved we should do many things we now leave undone for lack of courage such as love gives. The impressions we give others of our discipleship is a travesty of the real thing. We too often fail to venture because of some altogether unworthy feeling. Love trusts and dares—and wins.

The story I relate in the next chapter illustrates the length to which love will go in facing not only the moral issues but the physical effects.



## SIX

*"Love suffereth long, and is kind."*

I Cor. xiii, 4.

ONE of the most encouraging letters received since *Finding Men for Christ* was published came from a man who said that he was surprised at not finding his own story recorded there.

"I am the happiest man in England," he writes, and indicates that we ought to have included the story of his being 'found'.

Well, here it is; for once again it proves the power—the wonderful power—of love, human and divine.

Gangs of prisoners in one of our great convict prisons were engaged in the arduous tasks allotted to them. Warders with loaded rifles kept watch and guard. Among the groups were men whose records of crime were long and terrible. Some of them had only escaped the gallows because English law provides the opportunity when positive evidence is inconclusive or insufficient. That they were really guilty they sometimes boasted during their secret conversations, and threats were frequently made concerning what they would do when liberated. Others were simply automatons. Their sentences of so many years were just being lived out mechanically. They seemed to have lost all regard for either very good or very evil things. Their spirits were broken. Like dumb beasts they ate and drank and toiled and slept. Dates and seasons did not concern them. Nothing stirred them to either passion or remorse. While their fellows were seething with hatred and bitterness they just looked on placidly, endorsing nothing—surprised at nothing—asking nothing. They supposed that one day, if they lived long enough, they might emerge to freedom. But what mattered if they did not. Life held nothing for them. Every man's hand was against them. God—if there were God—was also against them. Even the monotony of prison life no longer affected them. To-day is as yesterday—and to-morrow.

But there were others, of whom No. 1475 was one. He was

not by nature a criminal. He had broken the law and was suffering justly for his acts. His great fear was that through constant association he might become like one or other of the classes I have mentioned. He detected a hardening process setting in. He frequently and bitterly repented his folly and its results. Sometimes he found himself engaged in surreptitious conversation with men from whom naturally he shrank. For this he began to detest himself. As the inward struggle proceeded he detected also a danger of forgetting that there were others interested in him. There was his wife. There were his children. When he had 'come to himself' after the great fall which separated him from them he began to realize the anguish he had caused them. He deserved that they should forget him. If his wife had forsaken him it would have been his just punishment. He had let her down badly. She had believed in him when others censured her for her faith and even shunned her because she bore his name. He knew she still loved him and constantly prayed for him. In the past he had derided her simple faith in God, now it was to him a fact of greatest worth. He did not share it, but he knew that this faith of his wife's would sustain her under this dreadful shame and suffering. Such a religion as hers, and he knew how truly she had loved God and had striven to express that love, would now be to her the one and only thing which would carry her through. The children would not be neglected. She would be mother and father to them as long as her physical strength sufficed. She would have to work hard and long, but it would be done as long as she was able. As things were there was nothing he could now do to help. The long weary stretch of years would have to be endured. But if he gave way to the temptations now so constantly and so persistently pursuing him, her faith and her loyalty would avail nothing. Was there really nothing he could do?

There was the prison chaplain, who surely would have some word of counsel to offer, but for a long time this thought was only an intermittent idea. Most of the men had their own strong opinions about prison chaplains, and did not hesitate to express them in his hearing. Indeed it seemed that whenever he reached a moment when he was resolving to speak to the chaplain his fellow prisoners found out some fresh and more warrantable reason for their antagonism to religious folk. All

sorts of weird and wonderful stories were retailed until it would almost seem as if the padre should have been wearing their own garb.

But 1475, as I must call him for convenience, was thinking things out for himself, and there was a reason for this. Many miles away in a single little room, a woman was praying day and night that her husband and the father of her children might not become a degraded criminal. That even though he had been guilty of the crimes of which he had been convicted, he might not deteriorate through his environment. Continually she sought God's help and guidance for him and for herself "until his release should bring them together again".

Others, too, were praying similarly, but unknown to him. The chaplain had been observing him and was drawn toward him; had noticed that this man had avoided speaking to him on several occasions when it seemed he was about to make a request. Enquiries made had revealed that previous to the imprisonment this prisoner had been a seafarer. A letter was sent to the present writer asking certain questions. These were not only satisfactorily answered, but all unknown to the convict a new line of reinforcement had been constructed. Naturally, a communication such as I had received awakened more than a casual interest. This was a man to be won for Christ and no effort must be spared. I advised that the chaplain obtain permission for the prisoner to write me a letter in his own hand. This was done and it proved to be the beginning of the "all things working together".

Prison regulations prohibit frequent correspondence, but as far as the rules (generously interpreted by an understanding governor) permitted us we exchanged heart to heart confidences. These letters of gradual unfolding I treasure as a witness that God's Spirit is not limited by the conventional methods recognised in our ordinary religious circles. They are the record of a process which I can only describe as above—an unfolding. The hard shell of prejudice, shame, pretence, and at first resentment, had to be pierced. There was but one instrument capable of doing this. The critical—the censorious—the judicial would never have won this heart. Only Love could reach such a nature. In the prison regime itself there was punishment enough. He was there he quite understood because he must be punished. In his case, if there had been no other element revealed in the processes he

was experiencing, the result would have been a gradual hardening and embittering of the man who like so many others would thus become habitual.

But we read much between the written lines and saw in faith a soul redeemed—a new creature. As the time sped on and we began to count months—then weeks and at last days only before the great release, I saw a very remarkable change in the expressions contained in the letters. There was not only a great yearning, but the language of love toward God. In the last letter posted from the gaol there was the definite declaration of discipleship which I had been hoping to see. But even the joy of this was eclipsed when I saw in the flesh for the first time the person whom I had learned to respect and admire as a fellow Christian. To say he looked happy is to dimly describe him. He was radiant. I looked upon a well-built man in whose features I detected the marks of a great determination as well as a soul at ease. Old things had obviously passed away and all things had become new.

"Well sir, here I am," was his smiling comment as we met. "I feel I shall never be able to repay you, sir, for all you have done for me and mine. The nightmare is over, and in a few hours I shall be seeing my dear ones again."

His strong face quivered and his eyes glistened. I held his hand and he gripped mine in both his. They were hard and horny with the labour he had performed in the years of his sentence. By his diligence and good conduct he had earned the fullest possible remission. Now he was free.

"I'm ever so glad to see you," I responded, "but there must be no delay here. Yonder is your dear wife waiting with your children—bless them, and I know they are eager to see you. We must meet again soon but now it is full speed for home."

"Home, sweet home," he quoted, "but look at this, sir."

He handed me a letter. I knew the handwriting to be his wife's. It was a love letter. Nothing could be more tender, more heartening, more encouraging. No reproaches—no talk of forgiveness—no hint at the anguish of the years; only loving hopefulness and plans. I cannot quote it here. It would seem like intruding upon a sacred privacy. Since he had handed it to me I had to read. But I'm certain that he saw how much it moved me.

"Isn't that great, sir? Ought I not love such a wife?"

That night before he slept—if he did sleep—he and she wrote another letter. It reached me the next day, and I carry a copy of it still in my pocket wallet to read when days are disappointing. It always does me good to read it—and better still, it has been read to many another whose faith was dim and who was enheartened by its reading.

For ten years I have been the recipient of other frequent letters all telling me of continued happiness and faith. Telling me of the progress of the bairns—of their occasional physical troubles but also of an unbroken progress in happy home life and schooling.

These ten years in such wonderful contrast to those dreadful years spent in a convict prison. Naturally no reference is ever made in the presence of the young people which would cause them pain. "The years which the locust hath eaten" are being 'restored'. Because the whole family 'love God'—all things have worked together for good. Love has lifted those who, but for His Grace, would have sunk to the level of misery which so many reach and abide in through sin.

The "happiest man in England" is to-day at his 'happiest' when he is persuading another to accept Jesus Christ's love and pardon such as he himself enjoys.

I suggest that whatever other remedial efforts to reclaim the sinful are put forth, this one great never-failing method should be exercised. I know there are many cases in which there is what seems to be such hardness of heart, such bitterness, such entrenched evil, such antagonism, such deception, that love seems wasted. It is not so. God is Love, and He has promised that no one word spoken for Him and in that spirit of love shall return void; it cannot.

Here is evidence which all can see and understand. Often and often during those years of waiting there came the temptation to think that all was futile. I have heard from their own lips confessions of the temptations which assailed; subtle suggestions as to the uselessness of patient love—but it won, and it has lifted as nothing else could do.

To meet that family is in itself a benediction. No miraculous and sudden bequest of money has reached them. They have had to toil and struggle; but it was all under the compulsion of Love born of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ; and now they are veritable 'millionaires'.

There is no week passes in which I am not asked to deal with others who, like my friend quoted above, are under the care of H.M. In some instances they are men whom I have known before. In others men whom I first met 'inside'. Still yet others whose circumstances have suggested to prison visitors, probation officers or prison officials that I might be able to assist them. A wide variety of personalities from the chronic drunkard to the first offender; from the 'old lag' to the professional man who fell into crime under swift and sudden temptation, or by a process of fraud. Young men from good homes, others trained in wrongdoing by their own parents. All these and many others are the objects of the Father's special care. We have learned that no case is hopeless although I am personally of opinion that our prison systems are not exactly conducive to the reclamation of the wrongdoer. Much depends naturally upon the character and methods of the officials who have a most difficult task to fulfil. So much can be done either of good or evil by those into whose custody a prisoner falls. Here, I am aware, I am opening up a very controversial subject. I have met police and prison officials who have done and are still doing their very utmost to aid any man or woman who gives evidence of repentance and a desire to 'go straight'. I have met those who caused me to pity intensely any person who might have to be under their charge. But it is the system which needs amendment. Great and beneficent improvements have been made, and I suppose that our British system is superior to most others, but judging by results apart from the cases dealt with upon the lines of personal interest such as I have quoted, there is little that can be shewn as beneficial in the present manner of dealing with law-breakers.

That even under such circumstances God's Love can find and transform men is cause for our wonder and praise. The human soul can rise superior to even the rigours, the discipline, the cast-iron regulations, the unfairness of officials, and even the duplicity of those set over them in authority.

Stone walls do not a prison make  
Nor iron bars a cage."

Love can set all prisoners free from the tyranny of sin, self, and oppression. It can override all barriers and break down all



divisions. It can set aside all human prejudices and wrong judgments and is stronger than any other human agency.

See in our next story how it triumphed over the foolish and blind ignorance of religious intolerance ; perhaps one of the most awful tyrannies of the spirit of man.

## SEVEN

*"Love . . . rejoiceth in the truth."*

I Cor. xiii, 4-6.

**I**F those of us who say with our lips that we love God really possessed that exultant feeling toward Him, the world would soon be changed. Its present hopeless state would be changed for buoyant and valiant activities instead of the almost universal fear and hectic preparation for strife and unspeakable horrors.

It is time all thoughtful Christians began to examine the position and to adopt those measures which undoubtedly have proven the truth of God's Word.

Every Sabbath there are hundreds of thousands of Christians talking and singing of the Love of God which has "conquered the world," and yet the next day we are capitulating to the enemy of our souls who whispers or roars to us that it is not true.

More confidence is being placed in destructive armaments, giant ships, scientific weapons, political strategy, powerful personalities, the power of the purse and the sword, than in the Power of the Spirit. We quote "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord", and then we turn to our material resources as if they were all sufficient.

We act as if education, recreation, position, wealth, were our real bulwarks against disaster. We use the words the Master taught His early disciples and ourselves to offer in prayer to Almighty God Our Father, and then turn to our daily activities as if He were quite unable to answer that prayer. "Thy

Kingdom come"—and we concentrate upon the assumption that it is useless to expect its coming. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven" and we have almost forsaken the idea of Heaven as a fancy. Is this exaggerated? Why then the impotence of the Christian Church to meet the challenge of the world to-day? The truth is love has grown so cold that many are now ceasing to attend God's House as in former days, partly because the lure of pleasure and self indulgence has captured them, partly because they could not continue to say and sing things they do not mean.

Where then are we drifting? Or is the giving up of a single-hearted love for truth, purity and peace a wise decision? Is it better to go 'the way of the world', to let passion, pride and lust have their full reign, caring nothing for the price which must be paid for such a course. See where they lead. See their fruits. Note the unrest, the dissatisfaction, the physical and moral deterioration, the chaos which is everywhere prevalent. Then listen to the Voice of Him Who calls you to once again put your trust in the Message of Love, Who Himself suffered that we might live. "I am come that ye might have life."

One listens in vain during talks with fellow Christians—in conferences—even in gatherings for fellowship for that joyous note which expresses love. Here and there it breaks forth generally when someone feels it sufficiently to sing about it. But I have seen it suppressed and checked by those who should encourage. Unless we recapture this spirit of a glowing love for our Master the power of our discipleship will continue to diminish, and instead of being able to lift our fellow men out of their despondency we shall sink with them into that condition from which there will be no recovery. I am challenging myself and my readers to meet the present dangers knowing that as in His day only Love can conquer.

Here is a story proving it. It is the story of how the simple but joyous witnessing of a few simple Christian men and women won a soul from despair. First let me say, however, that this story is related with one object only. It is given as evidence that whenever men and women with the real Love of God in their hearts set out to give their witness to His power the winsomeness of that witnessing cannot fail to influence even

the hardest of hearts :—but it must be that Love which God Himself reveals toward us, and not the selfish shallow emotions about which we hear and read so much in modern life.

One Autumn Sunday evening, when in the twilight we were holding an open-air service at which simple folk had been telling what the risen Lord had done for them, and I had been summing up their testimonies, one of our workers came and whispered to me that a young foreign Jew was anxious to speak to me in private.

That service was one of many held on that same spot during the preceding summer season. It was our practice twice each Sunday and several times during each week to march through those streets and alleys, sometimes with a band, sometimes just singing as we went, and to pause here and there giving a witness and an invitation to our indoor meetings.

Usually we concluded by a longer stand at the place of which I now write. It was at a junction of five roadways. Overhead a railway arch on which noisy trains, mostly heavily laden goods waggons, passed with a deafening roar, while tram-cars, with their peculiar ringing sounds and gongs rushed along constantly, and a stream of other vehicular traffic made much din on the cobbled stone setts.

It was a frequent joy to hear voluntary expressions from members of the audience when one and another of the converts were speaking—that he or she was ‘a miracle’. These folk listening had known the speakers in the old days when they were living godless lives and when it seemed an impossibility for any amendment ever to transpire. Now every evidence was manifested that a great change of life and thought had taken place, and the people ‘marvelled’ both at what they saw and at what they heard.

“And seeing the man who was healed  
they could say nothing against it.”

Miracles do happen when Love inspires to unselfish service for others such as this was ; when Love ‘seeks not its own ; when it ‘is not easily provoked’ even by hostile and bitter opposition ; when it ‘is not puffed up’ ; and when ‘it rejoiceth in the Truth’.

I had arranged to see the young man at the close, and was

thrilled as I have rarely been when he greeted me with a phrase and an emphasis such as I have longed to hear from my Gentile fellow Christians ever since.

He was a neatly dressed typical young Jew of about thirty years of age. His manner was of that cultured kind one recognizes as belonging to those of Continental training and education. His English was very good indeed and his voice pleasant. I had often been questioned by men of his kind during open-air addresses. Many of them well read and able to advance most interesting ideas, mostly questioning the Biblical and historical references used in our addresses, some bitterly antagonistic and even vindictive. But here was one who had not come to heckle, to question nor to deride. As I approached him with a welcoming gesture, he advanced respectfully toward me, and with an eagerness I shall never forget exclaimed "I do love your Jesus."

I confess I was astonished.

That he was sincere there was no question. The light of Love was in his speech and in his eyes.

"But you are a Jew," I responded questioningly.

"Yes! I am a Jew, and I do love your Jesus."

"Then perhaps you will please tell me how this came about, and if there is anything I can do for you."

"Ah!"—his facial expression changed and became more serious. "That" he said "is just what I do not ask. I have often heard and seen that my Hebrew people ask help when they profess to be converted. But I do love Jesus and I do not want material help."

I gathered from him that he had heard many discussions among his fellow Jews on the subject of material assistance and its relation to professions of conversion, and the facts had puzzled him sorely. His story, however, was a long one and I heard it with a thankful heart.

He was born in Poland. There he had been educated with a view to joining his father in the prosperous business of a corn merchant. The family were very rich. They owned large flour mills and employed many workers. This son and another, an elder brother, who, to reverse the Lord's parable, had squandered much of his father's money in riotous living, were the travelling agents of the firm. John, the man now with me, was

a most successful representative, and did big business for his father, travelling all over Northern Europe, visiting the capitals of the various countries, selling corn and flour. He came into contact with many people and in one place met a Christian colporteur selling literature. This man had talked to him and had persuaded him to promise to read some of the books he was distributing. John kept his promise, and on his journeys and in the hotels where he stayed he perused the printed messengers. What he then read for the first time deeply interested him. At first his interest was mainly from the historical aspect. He had only the faintest conception of the real Jesus of Nazareth. He recalled that the subject had never been discussed in his father's house. No one had ever introduced it, and save for the dim memory of casual reference during his school days he had no distinct ideas about Him.

As he read, the subject of the books—especially the New Testament arrested him. Jesus was a Jew. His words as recorded and quoted compelled his attention. He had a very high code of honour in his business and a great affection for his parents. But he now read of a still loftier standard of life and of a love which was more than filial loyalty—it was sacrificial. He was mystified—puzzled. He must read more and make enquiry if these books were true. The New Testament made claims upon the reader. It made demands which previously had never entered his thought. Its relation to his own traditions and the history of his people seemed to be vital if real and true. What he read refused to be forgotten. Deep and lasting impressions remained in his mind. There were also statements which challenged some of the practices of his religious exercises. Also there were elements in his business life hitherto regarded as proper which this Book evidently taught as contrary to the Will of God. If the Book were true he would have to consider these things. Such was the position when in due course he returned home from his business journeys.

Some days later, he was reading one of the books he had brought home with him when his father saw it.

There followed a very painful scene. The father was very angry. Demanded where he had procured the literature: bade him bring all that he had and at once, threw the whole of them into the fire, at the same time warning John that if

ever he were seen with such in his possession again the consequences would be serious for him.

John had never seen his father in such a mood before. In that household the father's word was law. Even the bad behaviour of his elder brother had never caused such fury to find expression. The latter had been threatened with curtailed resources and there had been frequent angry scenes when evidences of debauchery and waste had come to the parents' knowledge. But never had the family witnessed such bitter wrath nor heard such angry words. John was humiliated and pained. He asked his father's forgiveness and was told with great emphasis again and again that to possess or read those books was an unpardonable offence.

I could understand this recital for I had heard something very similar on one occasion when a Jewish lad who lived in Whitechapel had informed his father that he had 'decided' for Christ. It was an unforgettable scene, and I gave therefore a very deep and sympathetic hearing to John's story.

The desire of this young man was quenched for but a short time. It awakened with an intensity which caused him to procure another copy of the New Testament. For a time nothing happened in the home.

Then one morning, just after breakfast, as John was preparing to proceed to business, he was informed by a servant that his father wished to see him in the hall at once. When he arrived there he found that his father had called all the household, the family and the servants to assemble. As John approached, the father bade one of the men servants to open the entrance door. Then in a loud angry voice, and pointing to the open door he shouted to his younger son "Go! you have never been born—you are not my son!" Remonstrance was of no avail. The father had found in a pocket of John's coat the hated volume, and this was the result—absolute disinheritance. John left his father's house amid the scorn of those assembled. Blind prejudice had broken even the strong bonds of kinship. His mother and two sisters hastened away to their rooms in order to escape any sort of farewell, while the servants were prepared to eject him if he continued to plead with his father. There was no alternative.

While relating these things to me he was greatly moved and



several times paused to recover his voice and self-command. I felt it unnecessary to interrupt. It would be better to let him tell me the whole story in his own way. I wanted to hear how he had learned to wholeheartedly and joyously exclaim "I do love you Jesus."

He was in a very painful situation as he left the house. Without funds or provision of any sort, he was perplexed as to his next step. He dared not go to his Jewish acquaintances for aid, for if he explained truthfully the situation, they too, would spurn him. He could not approach the few Christian people whom he knew in business, for as yet he could not say he was a Christian, and he came from the well-known home of a strict Hebrew. He tried to discover the man who had sold him the scriptures, but without success. For two days and nights he tramped about without food or sleep. Then he found a barn into which he entered late on the third day feeling very ill and dejected. Apparently he was found there by farm hands, who removed him to a hospital, for the next thing he remembered was a nurse standing by his bedside holding his wrist. He was too weak to ask questions then but allowed them to feed him with liquid. He slept again and then awoke more naturally. He remembered that the Book had said "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." But he did not understand what that invitation meant nor how to obey it. To Whom was he to go and how? Jesus was not there. He had been crucified—killed—buried.

When the doctor came to examine him he would ask if he knew what this meant.

The doctor was a Jew. John dared not ask him; he would ask the nurse. He remembered seeing only one nurse, but now there were several moving quietly about. One of these presently came to his bedside. She also was a Jewess, but he must speak to her. She was very pleasant to him—told him that they had discovered amongst his few papers addresses to which messages had been sent. So far no replies had been received, could he tell her why? Were the addresses those of his relatives? Yes! Then why did they not respond or come to see him? Eighty or a hundred miles did not take long to travel, and judging by the papers found they must be in a good position. Indeed one of the doctors thought he had somewhere met the father, and if answers

to their message did not soon arrive he would make a personal effort to see him himself. So the nurse went on while poor John was trying hard to find some way of explaining how he came to be in his present condition.

Then the blow fell.

Nurse brought not one doctor, but three, one of whom spoke to him very sharply, telling him that now he was recovering from his exhaustion and exposure he must soon be departing, and further explaining that a messenger had reached the hospital from his relatives stating that the bundle he delivered contained a change of clothing and a letter; this the doctor had opened. The note fully explained the position, and the sooner he was out of their premises the better.

John asked if he could see the letter. It was handed to him but it had evidently been mutilated. By whom John never discovered. It was written by one of his sisters, stating that for the credit of the family she was sending clothing and a small sum of money, but advising him to 'mend his ways' as if he had committed some folly or crime. No explanation was asked by the doctors and John offered none. The next day he was discharged and was once more on the road.

He had heard that in England there was liberty to speak freely, to live peaceably, notwithstanding one's nationality, religion or politics. The idea of getting to England became fixed. He would now bend all his energies to reach British soil. It was not easy to do so he discovered, but the fact that he spoke English very fluently was a great aid. Reaching Dantzic, he was fortunate to find there a British ship, and upon making his request for employment was at first ridiculed by the officers. However, some influence changed the mind of the chief steward, who allowed him to work his passage to London as a scullion. He was very disappointed by the conduct of his fellow seafarers. Often he heard the name of Jesus spoken in contempt by those who were nominally Christians. But there was one man in the ship who claimed his attention. This man's manner attracted him immediately. He was one of four who shared the same sleeping place, and John noticed that he frequently read a book which he kept carefully locked away when not in use. One night John summoned sufficient courage to enquire what book it was and was told it was the 'best book in the

world' but that being a Jew he 'mustn't read it'—he supposed.

John begged to be allowed to do so, and for the few odd hours which were available during the brief voyage, he read again parts of the New Testament in English.

All this John told me with very obvious delight and then ensued a conversation which was very vividly impressed upon my mind then, and has remained a treasured memory ever since.

"So you landed here in the London Docks?" I asked.

"Yes; and as I walked around on that first Sunday I heard and saw you and your band. I enquired what it meant, and a woman told me who you were—so I followed and heard. For these many weeks I've kept following and listening until I heard again many times the words 'Come unto Me and I will give you rest.'"

"Who did you hear say that?"

"The first one I heard was a young man, and I know his name, for you have often called upon him to speak."

He indicated one of our bandsmen, a very godly fellow, whose witnessing had won many to his Master.

"So I came to the time a week ago when I felt Jesus was Himself saying those words to me. I knew I had sinned and needed pardon. I cried to Him for mercy, and now I know He has forgiven me and I love Him."

The simplicity of his recital was very moving. I could not but be reminded of another who came similarly to Jesus in the days of His earthly ministry, upon whom Jesus looked, and it is recorded, 'loved him'.

But the faith of our young friend was to be sorely tested.

He told us that he was employed by one of the many Jewish tailors in our vicinity. I knew the place well, and felt certain that John would not long remain there when it became known that he had become a Christian, although strangely enough the workshop was situated in Christian Street, E.1.

So it proved. John came one evening to tell me that he had been dismissed. One of his work-mates had seen him coming to our meeting, had questioned him, and had spread it abroad that he was a deserter from the Hebrew faith. The usual expressions of bitter hatred followed and soon open trouble ensued ending in

his expulsion from the house in which he worked, fed and slept.

Several times this was re-enacted. John insisted upon finding his own employment, and would not allow us to aid him.

Gradually the persecution wore him down physically. He became a marked person in the neighbourhood. He was jeered at and jostled in the streets—even suffered violence and injury. Employment was then found for him with a Christian friend in the City at a well-known restaurant. There he seemed at peace for a time since the staff consisted of several nationalities. Soon, however, he found that he was being avoided by those who should have helped him, and this developed into open hostility. A deputation waited upon the manager asking for his dismissal, and when this did not at once mature, a false accusation from which he could not free himself was made and again he found himself unemployed.

At this time I noticed that his eyesight was becoming defective and upon questioning him had this confirmed. He confessed that he was suffering a good deal since one of the episodes at a former workplace, when he had been surrounded and assaulted. That was some months earlier and he had never complained.

He was sent to a hospital for examination and returned to say that he had been instructed to enter at once for a surgical operation. The arrangements were soon completed, but before leaving me he had a request to make.

"Will you please mind my money for me?" he asked as he produced four sovereigns. This he had been saving for a 'special' purpose. How he had managed to do so out of his beggarly earnings I never knew. The amount had been drawn upon during his unemployment and so was diminished until this was his sole possession.

I had never previously been asked by one of his race to take custody of money.

A few days later I went to the hospital to visit him, expecting to find him ill in bed after a severe handling by the surgeons.

I was acquainted with the House Surgeon and upon enquiring for the patient was greatly interested at what I heard.

"Is that man known to you?" said my medical friend with obvious personal concern.

"Yes! he is one of our people and an excellent fellow," I replied.

"Excellent! I should say marvellous! I've never had a patient quite like him. We have had to cut both eyes, for his trouble was very advanced. We hope we have saved his sight, but let me tell you. When we told him that a serious and painful operation was immediately necessary, he said that he did not mind and would need no anæsthetic for he had Christ to help him. Naturally we took our own course about that, he having informed us that there were no relatives to consult except 'his father,' as he described one who I now learn was you. His recovery is miraculous. You will find him in No. — room, and he will probably be surrounded by several other patients who listen to him for hours while he talks about the Lord Jesus."

I found him exactly as indicated.

He had not heard me enter the room. Quietly I approached the group of men, all of whom had their heads bandaged so that they were unable to see. He was telling them the New Testament stories which he had so faithfully memorised.

"John!" I said softly, after a few minutes.

"My father!" he exclaimed, swiftly turning in my direction.

The other men turned in my direction and listened intently to our conversation as I congratulated John upon his progress. He was full of eager anticipations about his future plans. Just as he had been able to speak to his fellow sufferers in the ward so he meant to proclaim his Master when he was well enough to leave the hospital.

Upon his discharge he came at once to see me. Fresh employment had to be sought and suitable lodgings found. For six weeks he somehow existed upon ten shillings per week. One sovereign remained. At this stage he came to me with a proposal that he should go farther afield in search of work. He had heard that in the country men who were willing could find jobs in the fields and farms; he would try that. He begged me to supply him with suitable clothing in the place of his smart suit and reluctantly I did so—for I had but little hope of his finding acceptance in such a market. He was not physically suited for hard manual work.

His mind was made up—he would try it, for he was determined

not to be dependent upon his friends. So one morning he set out with his one sovereign and our prayers.

The remainder of his story reached me after a silence of nearly a month. He had tramped through Kent as far as Dover, visiting every place where he thought there might be work of any kind. Occasionally an odd job was given him, but usually only remunerated by a couple of shillings. But his letter brought me a story which warmed my heart. It appeared that having heard that there was a possibility of work on the north side of the Thames, John had tramped to Gravesend, crossed the river to Tilbury, and then journeyed to Southend and Shoeburyness. The quest was fruitless and even food and bed were beyond his reach. Physically exhausted he was resting on a public seat by the river bank at six o'clock one morning, feeling sick at heart and well-nigh despairing. He was crying aloud to God to help him, imagining that no human being was near enough to hear him. He was in tears. A sound caused him to look around, when he saw that he was not alone as he had supposed. A young soldier in an artilleryman's uniform had also sat down. He was gazing intently at John and as their eyes met he said :

"Are you in trouble, friend?"

The question was apparently asked in such a sympathetic tone that John immediately replied that he was in great trouble and explained the position.

"Ah! but you wouldn't be without friends if you believed in my 'Friend,'" said the bombardier. "You see, you are a Jew, and don't believe in my Friend. My Friend is Jesus, and if you knew Him, He would help you."

"But I do love Jesus, though I am a Jew," and John told the soldier of his experiences through his discipleship.

"Then you'll come along with me. We'll soon see to that."

The two then went on to Southend Y.M.C.A. There John was introduced to a good breakfast and some friendly members, one of whom was employed by a prominent business man in the town. To this employer John was introduced. Employment was given him in which his capabilities proved valuable. Later he was given a more responsible post which brought him daily to the City, and the last time I saw John R—— was at a crowded

open air gathering in Southend when the hearers were profoundly impressed by the young speaker's earnestness and power.

I know that in this instance it was literally fulfilled that "when father and mother" forsook their son the Lord did take him up according to promise. Love triumphed and overcame what seemed to be insuperable difficulties.

The secret of John's courage and loyalty was the pure love for his master born during those months when he tramped week after week through London's back streets listening to the simple testimony of poor folk whom Christ had saved. We little knew during those marches when in spite of every possible kind of adverse condition we spoke and sang of the Love of God as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and as experienced by those who testified, that a young Hebrew who was to be a soul-winner was being born again.

It appears to me that the occasions when the most marvellous effects of our services are secured are those seasons when we forget all else and just permit the spontaneous expression of our affection. Unless we love God we may do what we will we shall never win other hearts for the Kingdom of Heaven. It is also very certain, as Jesus Himself taught, that if we do not love God we cannot love our fellow men sufficiently to win him.

It is just here where the organized Christianity of to-day is failing. The 'boldness' of Peter and John was inspired by love, and led to a recognition of Whose companionship they had been keeping.

## EIGHT

"*Love . . . beareth all things.*"—I Cor. xiii, 7.

"Love so amazing, so Divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

I HAD just finished dictating replies to my correspondents one morning, when a tap at my door announced one of my colleagues, whose face was giving evidence of great distress.



"Good morning. What's the trouble?" I asked him, preparing at the same time to give him my undivided attention.

He was not a man to easily become excited or emotional, but I discerned at once that something serious was occupying his mind.

He waited until my secretary had left the room before replying.

"I'm afraid there's really mischief afoot. You recall Michael O'Regan?" he enquired.

"I should think I do. What's he been up to now?"

"Well, he's over at the Hostel creating quite a lot of disorder, but he asserts that he's going home to murder his wife."

I looked again at the speaker. He was quite serious and repeated his statement.

"Has O'Regan been drinking? Sounds like it, and as if he is just recovering."

"That's so. He has been soaking for days and yesterday was very violent and abusive. He was told that unless he behaves himself he will be refused admission in future; so he's very angry, saying that he knows his wife has been to the Hostel talking about him, and for that he is now going home to kill her and the children."

"Help me on with my coat, we must see into this," I replied, and leaving a few instructions, I hastened across Commercial Road to the Hostel.

On the entrance steps I found a group of men who had evidently observed my approach before I had noticed them. They had concluded that I had arrived to deal with O'Regan, for when I was near enough, several of them said at once together:

"He's gone along Salmon Lane, sir."

I at once hurried to my right, and making my way quickly between the rather crowded people in the street, saw my man ahead. I was soon by his side walking as fast as he.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"I'm coming to see fair play, Mike," I answered.

He stopped in the roadway. I also stopped. He started at full speed again. I did the same.

"You're not coming with me."

"I am."

"You don't know where I live."

"You live at 99, Eastend Street," I replied. The names here being used are not of course the correct ones for obvious reasons. But there are many persons who will readily recognize both the man and the vicinity.

I had given the right address, for that house was quite familiar to me. Many times, at all hours of day and night, I had visited that house. It was one of a large number in that narrow slum street, where several families occupied each house—a family in almost every room. In this particular dwelling I had known many residents from time to time, had seen almost every kind of degradation—had witnessed evictions, when furniture—so called—had been pitched through upstairs windows into the street, and had helped to take it back again when the rent owing had been paid, but I was this time to have experiences which were of a new and by no means enviable kind.

We stood for some minutes in this argumentative way. He glaring angrily, I endeavouring to keep calm but firm. I knew the man with whom I was dealing, but at this moment was not quite sure of what he would do. I was hoping he would be influenced by my presence and would give me an opportunity to quietly reason with him.

He was, however, in that most unreasonable condition of mind which frequently develops in men who are suffering from the delusions and distortions following a drunken bout. Cantankerous, stupidly boastful, wickedly cruel, and apparently bent on some form of mischief.

We frequently stopped on our way, repeated almost the same few sentences, he angrily and I possibly provoking him the more by my calm reiteration that I was coming home with him.

At last we reached the street which was but really about half a mile from the Hostel.

News of Mike's intention had apparently preceded him or else he had previously announced his plan. Several groups of women and children stood nearby as if awaiting his coming. As we hastened along the street, these folk furtively followed. They were quite accustomed to violent scenes in Eastend

Street. Indeed it was the regular occupation of many of these women to loiter about in the hope of some such excitement.

It was somewhat unusual, however, for one of their men folk to be accompanied by a parson in this way. Especially as it was evident from our procedure that we were not in agreement. Up the three stone steps hurried O'Regan with me at his heels. As we entered the passage one of his three children, a girl of ten, who had evidently been watching, rushed into the back room, shrieking "He's come! He's come!"

O'Regan soon burst in the closed door shouting that he had come to "do them all in." I dashed in almost beside him and just in time to see him seize a knife which had been lying on the old broken table. The wife and three girls were shrieking together. I closed with the man and we wrestled for that knife. The woman fell in a fainting heap. Two of the younger children crouched under the bedstead, while the elder called for help for her mother. In a moment that room and passage were crowded with women all shouting different words, but not one of them sane enough either to help me or to fetch the police. Indeed the last suggestion did not occur to them. Only those quite near could see what was happening. The rest were pressing to get nearer.

How I managed to pin that man backward by his outstretched arms upon the bedstead, I do not quite know, unless an earlier training in Rugger tactics unconsciously came to my aid—or some added strength were given me in response to my inward prayer for help. For I know not how long I had to firmly hold him thus. The knife had fallen to the ground and in the struggle had been kicked out of reach.

Gradually he became exhausted and at last begged me to let him free.

For a moment or two after I had relaxed my grip, he made no attempt to rise, and I wondered if my kneehold had injured him. I too was exhausted, but knowing the treachery of such moods, kept myself ready for emergencies.

"I'm beat," he murmured. "I give into yer, Mr. Dempster."

"Then you'll come along with me," I said as I pulled him to his feet. He was not a big man, nor am I, but he was strongly built, and, like most ship's firemen, tough.

"I'll come with yer."

But getting outside was not an easy business. Those poor miserable women had congregated to the tune of about a hundred. Their gossip ranged from "There's been a orful murder" to "That beast O'Regan's been fighting the parson," with a whole stretch of other imaginary stories.

O'Regan was now somewhat sobered, and between appeals not to give him up to the police and profuse apologies for insulting one who had been a friend to him, we returned to the Hostel where on the pavement stood the first representative of the law calmly reviewing the situation. Of course he did not then know what had happened, and only looked critically at my companion and me as we passed into the building. Here we arranged that O'Regan should be put to bed and cared for until the morning, it being my intention to interview him again then. This proposal did not mature for the reason that during the night he somehow managed to evade the officials and get away. I did not see him again for months—but—and here is the point of this story.

As I emerged from the Manager's office I noticed a young fellow who had been standing by the door leave the building. A little later as I crossed the road he hastened to my side.

"May I speak to you, sir?"

I turned and recognized the man whom I had previously seen within the building.

"Certainly," I replied, wondering if there were any connection between recent events, from the effect of which I had hardly yet recovered, and the questioner.

"I would like to tell you a few things and ask your advice."

"Then you had better come along with me now and in a few minutes I shall be more ready for a conversation. Is it about yourself?"

"Yes—partly, and also partly about that man you brought in just now. I sailed with him last trip, and in spite of what I hear has just happened, he thinks a lot of you, sir."

"How do you know that?"

"Will you let me come to your office, sir? I would rather tell you there. I have quite a lot to tell you and a good deal to con-

fess. We walked on and I was meanwhile endeavouring to read my man. He was, I guessed, about thirty-three or four years of age; of good physique; bore all the usual indications of life at sea; had a bad scar on his right forehead; very clear blue eyes; spoke with a slightly Welsh accent, and I should think had been brought up in a good family. His hands I noticed were not stained, as so many are, by cigarette smoking, and his fingers were those of a musician. I imagined them using a violin and a special glance at his features with this thought in mind seemed to confirm the idea.

I left him reading in our waiting-room while I washed and made myself presentable. I found that I had not entirely escaped the marks of conflict. My torn coat, several missing buttons from my waistcoat, some blood stains on my trousers and some rather painful scratches and bruises were reminders of the strange doings at 99, Eastend Street. I found that I had also twisted one knee rather badly, causing me to limp somewhat. Strangely I had not felt it before. However, these were minor ills and I hoped Mike O'Regan was submitting quietly to the plans I had made for him until the morrow.

"Well now, what can I do for you?"

A short pause. As if he were weighing his words, or were diffident as to how he should begin.

He started with a rush of words, quickly spoken, and almost in one breath.

"Truth is, sir, I'm a worse man than that fellow you've just left at the Hostel. Everybody knows what a drunken, cruel devil he is, and that's the worst about him. But he's got better parts, too, and I've none. I'm a waster, a hypocrite and a shabby scoundrel, while some people think I'm a decent fellow. I know I'm not, and you've just made me see it to-day as I ought to have seen it before."

He paused with his face lowered. He was flushed with some exciting emotion. He was preparing to go on again. I kept silent and let him proceed, just waiting for the opportune moment and the right word to speak.

"You see, sir—as I told you. I was in the same ship as that man, but I was there under false pretences. I am not the person I'm supposed to be. I have a wife and two children from whom I've run away. They are in Canada, as far as I know, destitute.

For two years I've not sent them a penny piece nor a message of any sort. I'm under an assumed name, so that I could not be traced. None of my people know where I am, nor what I've done these past two years. God help me, I'm a bad lot."

"What did you say about God?" I interrupted.

He looked up for one moment, then his eyes fell again.

"I said God help me, and that's why I'm here," he mumbled.

"Is there a God?" I questioned slowly.

I repeated the question.

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know that, friend?"

"Well, I'll tell you, sir. Strange as it may seem to you, it is that bad man O'Regan who has made me know it. You see, sir, I was over there this morning when he was carrying on about his home and his wife and the children, and when you came across I saw what happened. If I had thought for one moment that there was actually going to be the trouble which has occurred I would have gone with you. But coward as I was, I imagined he was just bluffing, as I have so often done. Now I see there might have been a terrible tragedy if there had not been a Christian man with pluck enough to face the music. I know now that what he told us in the ship about the way he's been helped by you in the past was true. I laughed at it. Told him it was all dope—that parsons were paid to do that sort of thing—that religion was all fake and that you and all the rest were humbugs and hypocrites. We all told him that at sea even when in his sober moments he gave us a description of how you had saved his home and kids. True, sir, he stuck up for you against us all, and I was the worst. He didn't know how often he was pricking me for I knew better. I had all the privileges of a good home—good parents, a good wife and—two bonnie little kiddies; and I've sold it all for what?"

He was trembling with deep emotion, and it was an opportunity I must not miss.

"Tell me a little more of yourself," I said quietly. "You haven't even given me your name."

He drew from his pocket his discharge book and a small wallet.

First he showed me a photograph from the latter. It was a family group. The young mother was fondly nursing a wee mite

of some three years—a smiling girlie of whose parentage there could be no doubt. The man in the group was my visitor, dressed in the uniform of a ship's officer and holding on his knee another girl child of perhaps four years—as like her sister as could be. They were a happy group.

I looked from the picture to the man enquiringly.

He read my query.

“Yes, sir, that is myself and I have my ticket as you see, but—”

“Then what is your name?”

He opened the discharge book at the page where the name is entered.

“There,” he said. “I am described as H—— J——, but that is not my name. My real name is H—— H——.”

“Nor is that your real birthplace.”

He looked up with a little surprise.

I proceeded—“No, you were born in S—— and your wife's name is Mabel.”

“How do you know that, sir? it's not in the book?”

“Nor does the discharge book tell me that your father is a minister of religion and your mother an invalid.”

He turned pale.

“I've never met you before, sir.”

“No, that's true, but you see I do know something of you.”

“How?”

“Never mind how at present. But let me tell you something more. You left your wife because you were ashamed of something. You spoke truly just now when you described yourself as a shabby scoundrel. That about sums up the situation. But you are in the right place. Many shabby scoundrels have found the way to put wrong things right here, and I'm certain God has sent you here for that purpose to-day. I'll shew you why I say that. Come with me.”

I had a file of letters upstairs in my office which related to this young man for whom enquiries had been sent out some months previously. While he had been speaking I had been recalling the many and various similar enquiries constantly being received. At the mention of the real name there had immediately sprung to memory the first pleading letter from one who had signed herself Mabel H——.



I took him to my office, he greatly wondering at what I might produce. The file was found and from it the following letter was extracted. I read part of it to him.

“ . . . We were very fond of each other and no happier family could be found anywhere until jealousy entered my husband's heart without the slightest cause. In fact, if he had only restrained his temper he would have learned that he had cause to be grateful to the person he disliked. He knows that I've always been a faithful wife to him and will be until the end. He has plunged us, who are perfectly innocent, into anxiety and misery, but if you can only help us to find him. . . .”

Then followed a few clues which had been given with a view to aiding in the search. These had been followed but until now without result.

I read again :

“ . . . His children and I are daily hoping and praying that we may soon see him again. If God hears and answers prayer He must soon bring us news, for He knows that I still love my husband and will forgive——”

I could not proceed because the man before me was now in tears and sobbing.

Presently he muttered : “ Of course God hears and answers prayer, and I now see how He has been doing it. My stubborn pride and jealousy were preventing His will. May He forgive me.”

Love was lifting. In the course of an hour a cable was flashing across the Atlantic :

“ Husband found. All well. Letter posted.”

The rest of this story is one more stream of evidence that the patient work of love was effectual in restoring “ the years which the locust hath eaten.”

Now I am well aware that in some instances the same happy ending has not to be recorded. In many cases we are still waiting the fulfilment. How long delayed that will be is not our concern. Suffice it to say that it is certain that the delay is not of God's

making. He permits it because He must, having given us the responsibility of obeying His Will or disobeying it.

Michael O'Regan is still unsaved. Still living a miserable, dissatisfied life and causing others the same. He knows the way but has not taken it. He is aware that wherever God is honoured and loved marvellous things occur. He is just one of countless thousands who are going on day after day, whether in poverty or affluence, living upon husks while the very Bread of Life is theirs for the acceptance.

To the thoughtful Christian there is much around us indicating that while it is gloriously true that God is Love, the Wages of Sin is death, and men knowing this wilfully choose the way of death.

Every day it is my privilege and duty to converse with all kinds of persons concerning these matters and the conclusion is incontrovertible that Love always wins.

I have seen the most cunningly devised and cleverly planned schemes, backed by all that money, influence and perfidy could do, brought to nought through the simple faith of those whose hearts are ruled by the Love which does not alter when it alteration finds. Such Love is a rare quality, but wherever it is found it is recognised as of God.

In the story following this is plainly set forth, and if this evidence were just an isolated one it could scarcely be accepted as proof positive, but long years of such happenings cannot be set aside. The witness is conclusive—"He is faithful that promised."

## NINE

*"For love is of God."* 1 John iv, 7.

**I** HAD on one occasion been speaking of these foregoing incidents at a Rotary Club lunch to which I had been invited. After lunch the President asked whether I would allow him to drive me to the railway station—an offer I gladly accepted. I

found that he had a double purpose. He desired to help me on my journey, but he had expressly asked that he might do so because he wanted to tell me that in the short space of a fifteen minutes' talk at the table he had been 'found' by Christ and had decided that his future belonged to Him.

It took us very few minutes to reach the railway station, but as there was a wait of about a quarter of an hour, this was an opportunity of which he availed himself to tell me something of his experience. He had been a traveller and had visited many parts of the world, partly in pursuit of his business, but also as a wanderer without clear objective. In his youth he had been well schooled with a view to a medical career. To put it in his own language, he "did not fall in with his parents' plans"; he wanted to see the world and not harness himself to a study course which would 'tie him down' for four or five years. He rebelled at being 'driven' into a profession he did not desire. Equally he resented his parents' wishes that he should regularly attend church. The priest of the parish where the family then resided did not attract him, on the other hand, this good man seems to have revealed a mode of life and association which repelled the youth of the district. The church was attended only by a very few of the older folk who were apparently only formalists who did not practice the Christian characteristics in their daily life. Religion was an irksome business; and this young man, as soon as he was old enough to assert his independence decided that he would choose for himself whether he would have anything to do with what he called religion or not. He had very hazy ideas as to what he meant by religion. All he knew was that in his home there was a formal acceptance of certain respectable customs which included church-going at stated times, but never under any circumstances did either of his parents seek to instruct him in the meaning of it. He learned parrot fashion certain forms of prayer, but when his enquiring young mind sought to discover what these meant he was always told by his father that "there was time enough for that when he was older."

As he grew he discovered, however, that the things said in church did not accord with the subsequent actions and attitude of those who said them. These impressions had a lasting effect, even when later he mingled with a wider group of people of several denominations, some of whom he admired. Apparently he tested

them in a way of his own, and according to his judgment found them all more or less lacking.

He found considerable numbers of other young people whose estimate of religious folk coincided with his own. This fanned the flame, and he became a professed unbeliever.

His parents deeply resented his attitude, quarrels ensued, and one day an open breach resulted in his leaving home.

Meanwhile he was quite aware, so he now recalled, that his parents were not entirely wrong. They had a standard of right and wrong after all, and when he had removed from the paternal roof he soon discovered that whatever criticism he had of his own folk, there was much more that was undesirable in his imagined freedom. He missed his parents and sisters sorely, but would not admit it at first, even to himself. He found new friends of a kind, some of whom he soon discovered were not really friends. He was introduced to places and people of whom he felt ashamed when he thought of the old home. But gradually he grew accustomed to these things and in his case familiarity bred contempt. He was soon "sitting in the seat of the scornful," and developing mentally into a state which was bitter and resentful. He blamed everybody but himself.

In his search for alternative employment, he having resolved not to pursue the profession into which he had been pressed—or as he then put it—was driven, he became acquainted with a family whose religion was of a quality which he could not deride. One member of the family, a girl, impressed him greatly and in conversations with her he began to learn that there was a reality he had imagined could never be attained. His first impression deepened into admiration and this developed into an affection he did not dare to make known. This acquaintance was however the arresting factor in his career. He resolved to be worthy of her in the hope of one day being in the position to declare his love.

They became quite friendly and the girl's father used his influence to secure the young man the employment he was seeking. Then his work took him farther and farther afield. He went abroad for his firm, and prospered in his business. This way of life ensued for some five or six years, and he was making good headway.

Upon returning from one long journey he was met by the news that the young lady was engaged to be married. He took this

badly,—although no one but himself knew the state of his heart,—and decided to stay abroad. The next few years were spent in wandering about in a desperate attempt to forget. His parents both died within twelve months while he was abroad. One sister was killed in a road accident, the other died in childbirth. Then he heard that the girl of whom he had been fond was drowned with her husband while bathing. It was rather a terrible recital of woes and I wondered what was to be the point to which he was leading.

He eventually married the daughter of a man whose source of income was a mystery until one day it was discovered that he was interested in the importation of foreign drugs. This led to my present companion being invited to participate in the same venture. He did so for one year during which he found that he was being drawn into a most nefarious traffic.

When he told his wife that he intended to withdraw she threatened to leave him if he did so.

His resolution was carried into effect and his wife left him. He had not seen her since. It was now twelve years since he had heard of her, and he had reason to believe that she had bigamously married another man in S. America.

But he had a son whom his mother had taken away and deserted. That son would now be seventeen years of age.

My address at the lunch had awakened his old yearning to see his child. The last knowledge he had of the boy was ten years old.

In the course of the luncheon he had heard the voice of God and had decided henceforth to become a Christian disciple.

What about his lad? Could I help him to find him?

I had missed my train. I would await the next and there was therefore time to prolong the conversation. I had been making mental notes and now asked whether he minded my committing some notes to paper. Thus it is that I can recall in this case the sequence of events above related.

I was intensely interested, for I felt I could discern the guiding hand of God throughout the story.

Upon enquiring what had happened with regard to the drug business I found that subsequent to his withdrawal prosecutions had taken place and the prime movers had been deported.

Ten years to be bridged—but how? Where was the boy ten years ago? With whom?

These questions were duly answered, but I could detect a great longing that was almost pathetic in this big man's voice as he gave his answers.

"Does your surrender to Christ mean that you will leave unreservedly in His hands every desire, even the desire to see your boy?" I asked.

To this he did not give an immediate reply.

"Suppose it is not God's will that you should renew association with the lad? That He has another plan altogether for both of you? What would you say?"

After several moments he replied: "I must leave it entirely to Him, but I feel He has not so willed it. I have a distinct urging to seek my son and therefore I feel that you have been sent along to our lunch to-day to help me."

"That being so I can do no other than promise to also seek God's leading in the matter."

It was nearly a year later that in turning over my file of unfulfilled quests, I made a discovery which humanly speaking should have been made weeks before.

In re-arranging the letters it came to pass that two of them were noticed to contain the name of a certain port in S. America. This observation led me to read them both over again. I then made a further discovery. They not only mentioned the same port but the same road in that port.

One was from a person to whom I had written when making inquiries for the son above referred to, and in the reply it was stated that all efforts to trace the lad had failed, one effort being related to a certain place of business in the road named.

The other was from an ex-merchant seaman, a chief steward who had written me with regard to his wife now in England and with whom he was seeking reconciliation. My aid was solicited. The address from which he wrote was in the road mentioned in the other letter. A coincidence!

That day a letter was written to the ex-chief steward who had settled in the port and was prospering in business enquiring if he had ever heard of a youth whom I described and whether he could tell me who now occupied the premises mentioned in letter, we will call for convenience, number one.

Six weeks passed. Then came news of a most encouraging kind. The enquiries of my steward friend revealed that the

chemist who had occupied the premises had removed to Liverpool, and had taken with him his wife and two children one of whom was an adopted son. He gave me the name and address in Liverpool. He further confessed that since giving up the sea, he had been led to consider his ways and between the time of his first and second letter had given his heart to Christ. He stated in most appreciative terms that his decisions had been brought about by the letter he had received from London, and further that not only was he praying that my dealings with his wife might be aided by God, but that he was praying for that boy whom I was endeavouring to discover. Here then was united prayer for a common object.

To Liverpool then was an enquiry sent. The reply was disappointing but it led to a new direction being taken.

The chemist had certainly adopted a boy but not of the name given. However he added that as soon as they had arrived in England the boy had disappeared and there was no clue to his present whereabouts. He feared however that he might soon get into trouble as he was a wayward lad, and was addicted to gambling.

That day I had an enquiry from one of the prison honorary visitors who frequently made such requests, an enquiry as to whether I could receive and help a youth who badly wanted to go to sea. He had recently reached this country from America had got into bad company and was now on remand pending the discovery of some friend who would undertake his oversight. His name was L——, the name of my rotarian friend !

Could this be his son ?

Immediately I replied to the prisoner's 'friend'—"Yes, send the lad along as soon as he is released. I am very interested."

The following day the boy arrived. A tall well-built youth with a fair open countenance. The sort of boy who under right influences could make an excellent sailor.

"Is that your right name, my boy ?"

"I hardly know, sir !"

"How is that ?"

"I have never really been told. My mother ran away and left me when I was quite young and a note was found saying that if I ever came to England that was to be my name. But I've always been called —— until I left my guardian. I took his name of



course, but when I ran away from him I suddenly remembered the name which my mother had left behind, so I gave that when I got locked up thinking it would not reach my guardian's knowledge. I am afraid I've done wrong in many ways, sir, and I'm sorry. What ought I do?"

"Tell me first why you ran away from your guardian."

"I did not like him, sir. I do not think he is a good man. I always meant to leave him when I was old enough to do so, and for years kept that piece of paper from my mother in a place where my guardian did not find it. So I hope he has forgotten the name altogether. I wonder whether it is really my right name. Could you help me to find out? I mean to do better, sir. It was really my guardian who first taught me to gamble."

This was very illuminating indeed and I began to feel the way was opening up.

That evening I phoned to my rotarian friend asking if he could come along at six o'clock as I had a problem for him to solve. I admitted that it related to our quest but did not tell him I had a probable solution. He came and over a cup of tea I began to tell him the story of our laddie. Very soon he was showing keenly that he would like to see that boy.

"But he is not a good boy."

"What does that matter if he should prove to be my son?"

I had no answer to that question, but sent for the boy. As he entered the room I watched the elder man closely. At first he stared hard at the youth, then taking him by the right hand he said in a quiet tone "Do you know who I am?"

"No sir, I've never seen you before."

"Yes you have, but it is twelve years ago."

"Where, sir?"

"Here in London."

"Did you know my mother then, sir?"

"I was her husband, my laddie, and you are my son. Your real name is Albert —. Don't you recall anything familiar in me?"

The boy looked and looked—first at his alleged parent then at me. Then after a pause.

"I feel, sir, that there's something telling me you are my real father."

They drew closer together and I too felt that the search was over. Prayer was answered.

The lad did not go to sea. He is a partner in the father's business. He loves the same Saviour as his dad, and is a loyal worker in the same Church. Friends who know them both say that they have never known parent and son to be such 'pals' as these two, and I who know the full story can testify that the bond which binds them is no ordinary affection it is the Love that Lifts above the sadness of grey memories.

Where the mother is none of us know. She must be left to the infinite mercy of the God Whose name is Love. Someday, somewhere, somehow, it may be His wisdom to guide another to her with the same message of forgiveness and compassion, meanwhile I believe that if she came to that home she would be forgiven to the uttermost.

How strange are the ways of humanity and how infinitely higher are His ways than ours, yet we so often and so long prefer our own—erring therein.

## TEN

*"For the Love of God is broader than the measure  
of man's mind."*

Faber.

*"Whatsoever things are lovely think on these things."*

Phil. iv, 8.

THE morning mail was being opened at my office desk. All sorts of communications were being perused and passed to my secretary for registration. Letters from various parts of the world from all kinds of people. My comments from time to time interested the young lady at the table by my side, for she had become accustomed to hearing many queer and remarkable expressions. Things frequently happened in that office surprising in their suddenness and unanticipated directness.

One letter I re-read several times. It was from a North

Midland city. It had a connection which I was endeavouring to recapture. Then in a flash it came.

"I spoke to this man this morning on my way from the railway station," I said half aloud, for I was more than surprised myself at the facts which were unfolding themselves as I perused again this note.

"Dear Sir—

"Last Sunday I was a member of your congregation at — church when you preached from the text 'And His eye seeth every precious thing.' You told the story of my brother's life, although I feel sure you did not know him. We have neither seen him nor heard of him for six years ourselves, and my parents are broken-hearted at his silence. We were a very devoted family, just the four of us, until S—— became acquainted with a young woman whose mode of life was not ours. We regularly attend God's House, but in a short time after they met my brother was a frequent absentee. Then he ceased altogether and we learned that he was to be found in company which was not good. He always had excuses, but my mother's anxiety was great, and naturally there was open disagreement. Then father spoke to him and that caused a quarrel. Father is not by any means quarrelsome. He is probably too patient; he is one of the best. But my brother left home and went to lodge nearby. One day we heard that my brother had got into trouble owing to the girl's companionships with other men. A scene had taken place, blows were struck, the police had intervened and had arrested S—— upon some trumped-up charge. He was discharged as innocent, but we have never seen him from that day. Do you think you could help us to find him? We think he may have gone to sea. Please try for us. We think we are being led to ask you, for the things you told us in your sermon and prayers caused us to pray when we got home. After that we talked and talked and this letter is the result. Do, please, help us if you can before sorrow completely breaks up our home, and ere it is too late to save S——.

"I enclose an old photo and a brief description of my brother. The other figure in the picture is myself.

"I hope I am not asking too much and that you will forgive me for bothering you with this long letter.

"Prayerfully yours——"

I read carefully again the 'brief description' which occupied two pages of notepaper.

"Yes! I spoke to this man this morning."

As I had emerged from the railway station and turned hurriedly into the open street, a man passed in my direction pushing an old and very groggy barrow. One wheel was so out of shape that at every revolution it seemed that the contents of the barrow might be deposited in the roadway. There were several boxes, an old portmanteau, some tressles and boards comprising a rather heavy load. It had been raining heavily and the roadway was muddy. As I walked on the pavement, the man with the barrow was beside me in the roadway and for quite a few yards I observed him as he pushed the load along. He limped badly as if in some pain. He had no overcoat or other extra protection from the cold wind and rain. He was not an old man but bore the marks of hardship and privation. Many such as he trudge our London streets day by day and night by night. I was just conjecturing as to what he was transporting in this risky way, and had come to the conclusion that he was proceeding to some open-air marketplace, where later on he would erect a flimsy stall for the sale of whatever goods these boxes contained. I imagined this poor chap at the end of the day repacking his unsold wares into those same boxes, loading up his barrow, and returning home with his takings. How much would he sell? What kind of things did he sell? Who was he? Why was he lame?—and so on my thoughts had run. Therefore he was quite firmly impressed upon my memory. Moreover, something still more impressive had taken place. As we journeyed along we passed a side turning out of which there emerged travelling at a swift rate, a private motor car. The man with the barrow was unable to quicken his pace sufficiently to evade the car, which just brushed past him giving enough contact to swing his barrow on to the kerb at my side. The old wheel gave way. The boxes were thrown half into the roadway and half on the pavement at my feet. The flimsy cords were broken and the contents were strewn around. The man was unhurt—the car did not stop. I was the nearest passer-by. Naturally I helped to pick up the pieces. There were several bottles of cheap perfumery broken. Some of the boxes of powder were already spoilt by the rain. Packets of cheap stationery were ruined, but we scrambled all we could quickly gather into the containers

again and then the man stood looking ruefully at the wreckage. The one wheel was in pieces. It had been mended too often to do duty again. A third person had arrived. He was a member of the Fire Brigade whom I had frequently met, as he was homeward bound after night duty. We were on 'nodding' terms. He crossed the road to where we were and taking the situation in at a glance, indicated in a few words a place 'just round that corner' where another barrow might be hired.

"Thank you!" said the owner of the debris, but he made no attempt to follow the kindly suggestion. The fireman walked away.

"Don't you think you'd better get another barrow? I'll mind the goods while you are gone."

"Thank you, sir!" again very plaintively, but no other movement only a rueful woebegone stare at his property as it became more and more drenched.

I guessed he had no money with which to hire another barrow.

"Are you out of funds, mate?" I asked.

He looked up at this, and then after a slight pause said: "That's just it. All I had I spent on stock last night, hoping to turn it over to-day, and now look at this. All my profit eaten up by that reckless driver, who doesn't care what damage he's done."

I was interested still more. This speaker was not a native of this district. He had been schooled elsewhere. He had seen better days. I wanted to know something more of him.

"I'll help you," I volunteered. "How much will it cost to get another barrow?" As a matter of fact I had some acquaintance with such transactions in other days. I knew that there were many depots around various districts, where scores and sometimes hundreds of these hand wheelbarrows were stored for hire at so much per day. I had helped to hire them before. I even knew places where any night one could find many of such barrows laden with all kinds of fruit, confectionery, and what not, stored for the night in none too salubrious atmosphere and premises. On the morrow these would be brought out by their users, the contents displayed temptingly and pushed through London's main thoroughfares, chiefly in the City, only pausing when the policeman was far enough away to permit a sale to a passer-by. In such precarious ways thousands of our fellows earn a 'living.' Some are but hirelings working on a kind of commission for another who

runs several barrows. The latter provides the vehicle, the stock, and the part rent of an old railway arch or shed for storage. Others are, like our present subject, owners of the stock, such as it is, but hiring the barrow.

I observed the name and address carved into the shafts of the ruined truck. It was that of an establishment about a mile away.

"You come from Dalston?" I ventured,

"Yes—and I was going to — Street." I knew the market place quite well and could now justify my previous speculations as to his procedure had no such accident occurred.

It was still raining.

He had not answered my question as to cost, so I made a proposal. I was already very soiled by the mud and rain and a little more wouldn't hurt me. Beside, here was a man who had been brought my way for a purpose. Such certainly I felt was the case although I did not then for a moment imagine that in half an hour I should be hearing more about him.

"Let's ask this man in the shop to keep an eye on your stuff while we take the barrow round the corner and see if we can do a deal."

The 'man in the shop' had been viewing the situation from his window and I had seen his expression. He was not in the same line of business, so that there could be no feeling of resentment from that point of view. Also I daily passed that way and could presume here also upon a 'nodding' acquaintanceship. I walked boldly in therefore.

"Can you help this poor chap by allowing his boxes to stand in your doorway out of the rain while he gets another barrow, please?"

"Why, certainly, sir. 'Ere, I'll lend you a hand."

Soon the boxes and the portmanteau were transferred to the shelter of the shop entrance with explanations that we would not be long.

The broken wheel was placed in the barrow with my attaché case and umbrella, now in a very muddy state, and while I held up the wheelless side of it the man pushed it slowly round the corner where surely enough there was a 'garage' for similar contraptions.

A deal was made, the old barrow left for repair, which meant a new wheel, or rather, a re-repaired one cheap. A stronger vehicle was hired for a half-crown deposit, and in a few minutes this was

loaded up and a more cheerful trader was on his way to — Street market.

I promised I would look him up one day. He was very grateful for the help given and asked my address so that he could come and repay me. I avoided this, but I told him I was often in the neighbourhood and would come along one day for a purchase and just to see how he fared.

Now, on arriving at the office, there was a letter of enquiry for one whom I felt to be the same person. "Lame in left foot—medium height—age 34, looking older,—slender,—brown hair and eyes,—slight stoop,—pleasant voice." All these tallied with my observations.

At lunch time I would go along to confirm my convictions.

I know now that during that very morning 'two or three' were agreeing to ask 'in His Name'. Having written the letter, the sister and parents sought God's blessing on him who was to receive it, and guidance as to his search for the missing one. The recipient was himself that morning in the midst of many duties seeking the same direction. The man at his barrow in — Street was compelled to ponder what had happened 'in the way'.

Although it is perfectly true that there exists among the very poor a wonderful *camaraderie* and a readiness to mutually help, it is also true that "when a man's down it's hard to find friends". At least that is a popularly accepted idea, not to be marvelled at. The desperately hard lot of many leaves little room for sentiment of thought for others. The thing to marvel at is that under such conditions thoughtfulness, tenderness, generosity or any other worthy quality survives. So our friend had been somewhat perplexed about someone turning up just at the moment when he was 'done for', to use his own words. Anyway, it had happened, and strangely enough, that morning he had done better business than for a long time. During his ruminations, his thoughts, he told me afterwards, were much with his homefolk, and there had grown by the time I called to see him, a great longing to see them.

My visit to — St. market was in itself something of an adventure. The market is only 'open' for certain hours of each day and not at all on Thursday afternoons. Hence I did not find it possible to go along at the midday as I intended. But the next day I made a special visit to that street to see how the man had fared, and to enquire if he were really the missing son and brother



for whom the writer of the letter was asking me to seek. I found the street market very crowded. Dozens and dozens of stalls of all shapes and sorts, but each roughly occupying approximately the same amount of space along the gutterway. Most of them had rudely fashioned canvas canopies to protect the goods from rain and wind, but some were merely barrows or boxes with goods heaped upon them for display. I found quite a number containing the same kind of goods as those which were spilt in the road on the Wednesday previous, but no sign of the man I sought. I asked a few questions of the other stall holders. Several knew men who were lame and had directed me where to find them. I was surprised to learn how many of those street vendors were crippled. At last I was directed by a woman stallholder who, hearing my enquiry of a man who was obviously her husband, had volunteered :

"I guess he means that hoppy chap with a past."

That sounded very truly descriptive and I was interested.

"Why do you say that?" I asked.

"Well, if he's the bloke you're looking for, I bet you he's got a past."

"What do you mean by 'a past'?" I ventured.

"You're a parson—ain't yer? Well, 'ere's a prodigal son, if it's the hoppy chap I mean. Fact, guv'nor, there's two of 'em. 'Im and 'is mate."

This lady had a delightful way of slipping some of her aspirates and remembering others. I've often noticed this in certain localities and have come to the conclusion that it is a question of school grading. There are schools in certain slum areas where the matter of the 'three R's' is made of prime importance and English is not overlooked. In other cases I have found that the language spoken by the scholars when they 'leave school' is creditable to no one. Yet I am certain that even among the poorest folk there is a place and respect for our mother tongue well spoken. It is not appreciated when, in order to assume a friendly familiarity one talks roughly and coarsely.

Evidently my lady interrupter had quietly appraised 'Hoppy,' as she called him, as one who had seen better days and had fallen from his former estate. I was directed where to find him and discovered that I had somehow overlooked his stall and had passed it before. There he sat upon an upturned box awaiting

customers but at the moment seeming to be not too eager to attract them. Others were shouting volubly to the crowd or to imaginary audiences the qualities of their wares. I took a good look at my man. He was dressed much as others about him. His clothing was more than well worn. It had been patched and mended but it was clean. I looked at his features and his hands. There was intelligence which I did not think had been depraved. The signs of worry and distress were marked. At the moment he was apparently absorbed by the reading of a book which he held in hands that were as clean as his work would permit. They were not the hands of a degraded man. I somehow visualized them occupied in a very different task from the trundling of barrows or the handling of cheap finery. I took from my pocket the photograph which has recently reached me. Obviously it was a portrait of this man, although attired differently. The man sitting on the box was older but I was satisfied he was the person in the photograph. Praying for guidance, I decided to speak to him, but was led to a precautionary approach.

"Good afternoon, friend. You see I have come along as I promised. How is business to-day?"

He looked up, smiled as he recognized me, shut up his book and carefully placed it in his pocket, but not before I had seen its title. It was a volume of Browning's poems. I could not see which particular poem had so held him that his business had been risked.

"Only fairish," he said, but continued, "It was very funny but the other day when you helped to rescue my stuff I sold all out and even the soiled stuff went, so I did not suffer much loss, thanks to you. I was therefore able to get my barrow back. See, it is mended."

I pretended to be very interested in the repaired wheel and remarked jocularly that I could have made a better job of it myself. He smiled rather grimly, and I followed up by asking him:

"Couldn't you have mended it yourself?"

"No, that sort of thing is not in my line."

"What really is your line then?" I asked.

"Oh, well, when I was younger I was a teacher."

"Teaching how to make face powder?" I jested.

"Not exactly; that's a modern invention which I do not understand, although I sell it. I was a school teacher until I went to sea."

"So you became a seafarer. Why did you give that up? And why did you leave teaching to go to sea?"

He looked at me steadily with what I felt was slight resentment.

"I'm sorry," I said, "if I've touched a sore spot"—and I thereupon became interested in the goods displayed upon his stall, asking a few general questions and at the same time chaffing him. I could see he was distressed.

I found he was still gazing intently at me as if pondering whether he dared pursue the matter with me or should change the subject. At least that was how I construed the situation, and later events proved it to be the true construction.

"I don't mind telling you," he said thoughtfully. "The fact is it was a love affair which caused me to decide to go to sea. I could not have the sweetheart I wanted, so I decided to get away and forget. I got away after a little difficulty, for I found it was not quite as easy as I had imagined. I'd been told that anyone could just go down to one of the places where there were docks, ask for a job and get it. My experience wasn't quite like that."

Now I was very fully interested. He was discussing a topic on which I could with authority speak if necessary. Also it was quite easy for me to discern whether this part of his conversation was based upon facts as far as seagoing conditions were concerned. He did not know who I was nor how much I knew about matters marine.

"It was quite a business, I found, and the question arose as to exactly what position I could fill aboard a ship. I was not cut out for a fireman—I knew nothing about a sailor's job—I was not experienced as a steward. Everywhere I was asked to 'show my book'. I discovered that every man going to sea carried a 'book' or certificate of his previous employments on board ships. I had none, but there were plenty of men who could produce their records so that these were given preference. Again and again I tried without success. I went from one port to another and eventually reached London. It was not my first visit but I knew nothing about the docks except that they were down in the East End somewhere. So I came down here and simply got lost in the crowd. I found hundreds like myself drifting around all the places where men were engaged, got thoroughly depressed and hopeless until one day when I met a friendly chap who offered to

sell me his book for a couple of shillings. I was nearly spun out but I thought the proposal was worth while, and in ignorance made the purchase."

He saw me smiling at this and paused in his recitation.

"Why do you smile?" he asked. "Do you know anything about such transactions?"

"Yes! quite a bit,—but go on. I'm very interested."

"I soon found I had not only made a mistake, had wasted my money and had been fooled, but that in presenting the other man's record as my own I had involved myself in a serious illegal act. The first chief steward to whom I handed the book looked me up and down and burst into laughter. "This isn't your book," said he. "Six feet one; you're not six feet one—get out or I'll have you arrested." I gathered there was a description of the owner which I had overlooked. I now remembered that the man who sold me the book was a tall man. I felt very guilty and walked out. When I examined the book more closely I could see that I must have been an idiot to imagine that anyone acquainted with such matters would have been deceived. The book went into the fire when I reached my lodging. However, I had to get work and I was rapidly learning the ways of the shipping offices. Eventually I got a chance as a scullion and did a trip to Australia and New Zealand, but my lameness and other disqualifications had brought me such misery that I decided I was not built for the sea. However, I did in all four trips and saved a few pounds. This soon vanished ashore when I had to exist upon it and I decided to try a commercial life in this line, so now you know."

Of course I wanted to learn much more than he had volunteered. If my estimate of him was a correct one he would be scared away by too direct questioning. He would have to be dealt with most cautiously.

"You are seeing life in many forms and are doubtless learning quite a lot about human nature," I suggested, hoping that this idea might lead to more personal opportunities—as indeed it did for a time.

"Yes! and I find it a great school."

"A sort of finishing academy."

"That's so; but I guess I've a good deal to learn yet."

Here was my opening.

"You have, my friend. From what you have told me already

I imagine that up to the present you have missed the road." I watched the effect of this venture. It went home. He shot an enquiring glance at my face to discover what the words were intended to imply. He caught my expression and his eyes fell.

"I've finished with religion," he muttered.

"Why?"

"Don't let's discuss that. I've no wish to speak about it. It's too painful."

"Oh, then you are very interested. Have you ever really tried it out?"

"Do you mean have I tried to be Christian?"

"Yes, that's partly what I mean. Was your sweetheart a Christian?"

"That was the trouble," he replied, and then moved away as if to conclude the conversation. I noticed too that he had turned pale and was agitated in manner. I had upset him.

"I'm sorry if I have touched a painful spot, but I am anxious to help you if I can, for I think there are better ways of life ahead of you."

He turned upon me sharply and bitterly.

"Life has nothing better to offer me. I'm one of life's failures and the sooner it is through the better for everybody."

"For everybody?" I queried.

"Yes, everybody," with great emphasis.

"Then there are others concerned and you are not just a lonely individual. There are those who care for you and pray for you. For instance, there is your sister,—and—there is your mother,—and"—here I spoke very deliberately to observe what effect my words had upon him—"there is your father, Mr. H——."

He had been standing at the other side of his stall appearing to be more interested in rearranging his stock than in prolonging our conversation.

Now he hurriedly came round to where I stood, looked me squarely in the face and quietly asked:

"How do you know I have such relations?"

"I think you have," I replied in a similar quiet tone.

"Why?"

"Because God loves you and He is telling me so."

"Whatever do you mean? God doesn't do things like that

to-day. He has no interest in me or He wouldn't have let me suffer as I have. I don't even know if there is a God."

"Then perhaps you'll let me tell you a story. Last Sunday week I was preaching in a certain church in Y——."

He again gave me one of those quick enquiring glances as I named his home town.

"God sent me there for a very special purpose. He wanted me to speak in the hearing of a certain lady named M—— H——."

I noted that he was tightly clutching the side of his stall as if he were afraid of falling. He was very pale and was trembling violently. He saw that I observed this and tried to recover himself.

"Are you feeling unwell?" I questioned.

He was now staring hard at me and seemed likely to fall. Then bracing himself he asked,

"How do you know me and my people? And who are you?"

"Who am I? Well, this morning I am just God's messenger to you. In answer to prayer He caused me to meet you when your barrow broke down. He inclined me to help you pick up the pieces. He sent me to Y—— to preach in your sister's church. He put it into her mind to write to me and ask if I could find you, and here I am."

"Then you're on a fool's errand and wasting your time."

His pallor had passed and his face was now flushed with excitement and anger. He began to hastily pack up his wares and was trembling visibly. Then suddenly he turned away and hastened across the road to a side turning, down which he disappeared. I did not realize what he was doing for a moment. Then it occurred to me that he was endeavouring to evade me. I, too, hastened across the road. He was nowhere to be seen. I ran along the street along which he must have gone and saw him in the distance just boarding an omnibus. It had moved away before I could reach it, but observing its number and destination, I followed on another vehicle to the terminus where he too would probably disembark, as it was but a penny stage. Fortunately, my bus followed his closely and I arrived just in time to see him disappear into a Chinese café. It was a very poor sort of place and very dark. The owner I knew by sight, but had never spoken to him. When I entered the shop, this Chinaman accosted me with a very broad grin and some words of enquiry in very bad

English. Seeing my searching glances he indicated that no man was there.

"I'll look for myself," I said, brushing past him. But the door I opened simply led into a backyard from which a gate led into a side street. My man had either run straight through the shop into that alley or was still on the premises; which, I could not determine. From the Chinaman I could get no information at all. He pretended to be quite unable to understand, and solemnly repeated with vigorous shakes of his head "No Manee here." A little woman of very tender years then appeared. She was English and I explained to her the situation. She tried to assure me that only she and her husband and two children were on the premises and I "could see if I liked".

I accepted her invitation and noticed that Mr. 'Johnnie' followed me very closely, looking perturbed but grinning whenever I looked squarely at him. Apparently my man was not there.

The lady knew the man I described. He did come there sometimes to do business, but had not been there that day.

I hastened back to the street market—the barrow and boxes had gone. The stallholders I questioned informed me that 'Hoppy's' mate had come and had taken the goods away. They had no idea whither. It occurred to me that I had better return to the Penny-fields shop. So for the second time I made my way there. The café door was shut and in spite of continued knocking I could gain no entry. This seemed to me to be rather mysterious and I began to suspect that there was some collusion. Could it be that there was any illicit trading? If so, that would probably account for the strange way in which my proffered kindness had been resented.

A week later I had the explanation—and a remarkable sequel. I had replied to the sister's letter and had given her an outline of the above happenings. Naturally the news had given the family a great deal of joy but also some misgiving. In her reply to me the sister had said that she would be coming to London in a few days on some private business and would call along to see me if I would give her an appointment. This was arranged and she duly arrived and was announced. At the same time the official who informed me of her arrival also notified me that Inspector — of the local police was also wanting to see me. Both persons were waiting in the same apartment and I had therefore to explain to



the officer that I must see the lady first for a few minutes, after which I would see him if he could wait.

"Oh, yes," he said, and then whispered to me "What is that lady's name?"

I was rather surprised at his question, but I spoke her name.

"I thought so," was his reply, then "I think I know her brother." This time I was greatly astonished and whispered hurriedly "Then you must presently help me—please wait."

This police officer was a godly man and I perceived that events were being arranged for some purpose. I had lived long enough to understand the marvellous truth of "the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." I knew the signs and indications already given and more would follow. Withdrawing my lady visitor to an adjoining room, I greeted her for the first time. She knew me because of the occasion at Y—when I had preached the anniversary sermons and had impressed her with certain stories. I did not recall having spoken to her, although she now assured me that I had done so as the congregation were leaving the church in the evening.

It was obvious that the two were brother and sister.

"So you have met my brother and are going to do him good," she began.

"I am going to try but he has again disappeared, at least temporarily. I do not think he is far away. But unfortunately I'm afraid it will not be possible for you to see him to-day."

"Why do you say that? I was hoping that you might take me to him."

I then explained how he had run away and my failure to trace him for the past week. She was much distressed and begged me to tell her all I knew and all I suspected.

"Is he mixed up with undesirable folk? Is he married?" and other questions were anxiously and quickly asked.

"I have no evidence of any marriage," I explained, "but I fear that some of the people with whom he has association are not of the best kind. You observed that tall gentleman who is now waiting to see me?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't be alarmed at what I now tell you, because I do not think there is really any cause for worry on that score, but he is a police officer, and when he saw you he recognized you as a relative

of your brother whom he knows. How he is acquainted with him I do not yet know. But perhaps you'd like to meet this officer after I've spoken with him. Will you please excuse me for a few minutes while I enquire ? ”

I left her and made my way to where the inspector was waiting. He had come to see me on very different business which took us both to a distant part of the building. That concluded and satisfactorily settled I opened out about the subject of this story.

“ Excuse me, Inspector, why did you ask me about that lady who was waiting with you to see me ? ”

“ I know her brother, if I am any judge of family relationships and likeness. Only the name you gave me is not the name by which I know him. ”

“ Who is her brother, may I ask ? ”

“ Oh, yes, I can tell you that without any breach of duty. He is a man whom we have reason to think is being used as a medium for passing on stuff which is not acquired honestly. In fact I'm just waiting to find out exactly where he gets it. Do you know him, sir ? ”

“ I think I do ! ”

“ He sometimes has a stand in — Street market, and it was through certain people who do business there that we became suspicious. I do not think he is aware of the way in which he is being used and I only wish I could find out who is behind him. ”

The officer saw I was more than casually interested. We had often consulted about many persons and things, and shared frequently our views on human nature and its relation to God.

“ Tell me, do you think this man is breaking the law ? ”

“ Well, that I cannot say, but I think he is sailing near the wind. ”

I laughed at that.

“ You're not a sailor. Don't venture into nautical terms or we may have a wordy argument. But I know what you mean. Perhaps I can help you. ” I then related the incidents above recorded and at once I saw that there was likely to be a very serious development unless great care were taken.

“ Thank you, ” he said. “ You've given me a very valuable clue. And now I'm going to ask you a great favour. When you have finished your interview with the lady may I ask you to pay another visit to Pennyfields ? ”

“ With you ? ”

## 116 THE LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO

"Oh dear, no, that would never do at this stage. But I may tell you this—I'll not be very far away. What time could you go down, sir?"

"You mean to resume my enquiries for my man?"

"Yes."

"Well, I think it is likely the sister may want me to take her along."

"That will be better still. Shall we say in half an hour then?"

"Yes, that will do, only I hope you'll not take any steps which will cause the sister further anxiety."

"I do not think so. In fact I'm hoping that you will get your man away out of it before any trouble arises. Please try to do so. We shall be freer to act if he is not involved. But you've done us another good turn to-day, sir, and you'll presently be glad I happened to call in just while that lady is here. Good-bye, sir, for half an hour."

I returned to the room where I had left Miss H.

"The officer has gone," I explained, "but he told me how he knows your brother and I'm glad to say there is no cause for anxiety in that way."

"But I'm very worried about it. How does the police officer know him?"

I then told her of the incident of the week before when I had traced her brother to the house and had then lost him.

"I would like to see that house," she said.

"So you shall. Indeed I was about to suggest that you come with me while I make one more enquiry there for him."

This was agreed and at the appointed time we turned from West India Dock Road into Pennyfields.

There were many Chinese about and this naturally interested the lady who accompanied me. Some of them made signs of recognition as I passed and this still more impressed her.

Just as we reached the house, to my complete surprise her brother was leaving it. He could not escape, we were too close upon him. I had actually pushed the door half open as he was opening it from the inside.

They two stood staring mutely at each other for a full five seconds. Then I drew him outside the door and pulled it to. At that moment a man passed. I saw it was my friend the inspector who raised his hat and pleasantly said "Good afternoon, sir."

He did not stop.

"Now you must both come back with me and have some tea," I announced. There was no hesitation. The man was pale as death, but at once walked with his sister toward our rendezvous. She took his arm and I noticed that his limp was very pronounced. For some distance neither of us spoke. Then I felt it necessary to break the tension.

At my first words the man broke down, and I saw his sister's arm pressing affectionately against his while she too could hardly restrain her tears.

"Come along, old friend, a cup of tea will soon cheer us all. Then we'll talk over all the things which we must not let these Chinks hear, eh?"

Soon we were sitting at a table with tea before us and with the door of our little sanctuary closed we talked.

There was a great deal of unburdening, and when I found the two were at one in spirit, I made excuse to disappear for a time. When I returned it was to learn that a promise had been given to return to Y—.

But I had to first carry out my Master's business and to see to it that there was all the reinforcement of a definite and certain knowledge of God's forgiveness.

I found that there was little need for human explanation or exhortation. The Holy Spirit had been guiding into all Truth this wanderer. At my first suggestion he was eager to declare his contrition and repentance. For the past days he had been haunted by deep feelings alternating between desire to come to me and make known his state, and the feeling of shame which kept him from doing so.

He said that at the moment of our meeting in the doorway of the Chinaman's house he was being torn by these conflicting feelings. The sight of his sister's face and of myself had almost caused a collapse. He knew now that it was the Love of God the Father which had been seeking him. He was ready to seek His forgiveness and the pardon of all whom he had caused to suffer.

For a few minutes there was great joy in that little room and the consciousness of a fourth Presence and a Voice.

"Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

During the conversation on the way to the station I learned how the matters had been conducted which concerned the police.

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It was my great joy after I had seen the train away to hurry back to the police office and convey such information as would cancel all suspicion of culpability on the part of H——. I then also learned that while we had been dealing with the man and his sister in my office, the police had been dealing in quite another fashion with the house in Pennyfields and its occupants. Subsequent enquiries proved that not only had H—— been an innocent dupe, but that others too had been implicated in a business which might have led them to prison but for the collapse of the scheme that day frustrated. The guilty ones were duly brought to justice and punished, while the wise discretion of a godly official prevented disaster in at least two homes.

It is also a delight to report that through the kindly influences of a dear woman who was then devoting her life to work among the Chinese, the chief culprit was brought to see the error of his ways and is now assisting in the spread of the Gospel among his own people in Central China. A few weeks before this gracious woman disciple was called Home we were discussing these incidents and I heard from her lips a good deal which was most welcome news, and in which we rejoiced together.

While I have been writing the above I have been praying for those who find it difficult to believe these narratives of God's wonder-working Love. How can Christian readers think it 'incredible' that the power of the Holy Spirit can operate in these ways! "All things are possible with Him with Whom we have to do." If we believed that truth many more miracles would happen. The ordinary ways of life would provide us with more astounding events than any recorded in fiction or fancy. Human affairs are teeming with the most wonderful facts if only we had the vision to perceive them, and the love to comprehend them.

Even in the ranks of those who are leaders there is much unbelief, hence there is much disappointment and distress of mind. In the days of His earthly ministry the Lord found places where He could "there do no mighty works because of unbelief," and it is even so in our day.

If we Love God He will fulfil all His promises, but if we love only ourselves He cannot use us in the work of His Kingdom.

## ELEVEN

*"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."—1 Cor. ii, 9.*

WHEN the s.s. — was berthed at Southampton after its long voyage from the far East there was on board a young man who had made his first trip under very remarkable conditions. He had not been 'engaged' in the usual way by the responsible officer, in fact none of the officers knew he was aboard when the vessel left port in Australia. He was a stowaway, and upon being discovered he had been put to menial tasks and had thus made some show of earning his 'grub.' Quite a number of such instances occur in every large port. It is of course a punishable offence and frequently the men concerned are handed over to the police authorities, charged at a police court and punished.

In this case it did not quite work out in that way for a very good reason which will I think become apparent as the story is related.

One of the most wonderful aspects of human affairs is the way in which God 'prepares' certain factors in the experiences of those whom He plans to redeem from the ways of sin. His redemption is for 'whosoever will,' but there are constantly occurring cases in which it seems that the perverted wills of men and women are 'compelled' by Love amazing and Divine.

In Jonah's case the Bible records that God 'prepared' 'a gourd'—'a worm' and a 'vehement east wind' to effect his purposes in the soul of that prophet.

I am certain that the same kind of preparation goes on in countless instances wherein God uses men and circumstances as the medium of His loving providence.

This story reveals this fact. The youth of whom I now write had been the subject of loving prayer for a long time and the way in which God heard and answered those prayers must claim the attention of those who have a heart to understand.

To explain why this young fellow became a stowaway on board ship it is necessary that I should relate a part of the story as he himself gave it to me later. It appears that he was the only son

of deeply religious parents in an Australian port. There were two sisters of this boy and it was the regular practice of this most respectable family to attend God's House at least twice every Sabbath. Nothing save extreme illness or other unpreventable conditions was ever allowed to interfere with this habit. The household was governed by rigid discipline and rules which were all very well while the young people were quite juvenile. As they grew older the lad began to question the necessity of such 'cast-iron' arrangements as he called them. His sisters were not of the same temperament as he, and they endeavoured to support the parents' desires and demands. Frequent discussions took place and gradually the mother became aware that there was impending trouble. She remonstrated gently with her son and strove to keep from her husband the boy's growing resentful and rebellious attitude.

One Sunday evening however, the matter reached a crisis. The whole family had been to Church for the morning service; there had also been a special event in the afternoon which father had insisted should be attended by the family; and preparations were made for all to again be present in the evening. The special preacher for the day had been a guest at lunch and tea, but had not been appreciated by the son, who had dared openly to question some of his remarks. This had angered the father who was therefore in no amiable mood when his son tried to excuse himself from the evening service. "I wish you to come," the father had insisted while the boy further pressed to be excused. Mother added her entreaties and when the father had reached the stage of saying that "As long as you are under my roof you must do as I say," she prevailed upon A—— to obey.

He was now eighteen years of age and while he did as his father demanded, his mind was made up that at a suitable time he would have his own way.

It was an excellent home and there is not the slightest indication that the parents had been other than loving and true in their care of their children. No reproach was ever uttered by the youth who told me the things I have so far related except upon this one point. He did not then perceive why his father and mother had been so uncompromising in the matter of Church attendance.

One Monday morning A—— left home as usual to go to his employment. Before leaving however, he had secretly made up a



small parcel of food intending to take a train to a distant town and try his fortunes alone. Later on when he had obtained fresh work he would write home and would hope to satisfactorily explain why he had left. He was sore at heart over some heated conversation of the previous night. Thus he was not normal and temptation had its way with him. He was carrying out a scheme which had been in his mind for some weeks. Again and again filial affection asserted itself and he had resisted the tempter. But this morning he gave up and was making his way to the railway station when another idea occurred to him. What about going to sea? There were the docks and ships! He turned toward the harbour and saw a big vessel with only a few persons apparently on board. He watched their procedure for some time, fascinated by the suggestion that he might get on board and hide until the ship was well out to sea. Then he would appear, ask the captain to allow him to join the crew and all would be well. This dream intrigued him. Forgotten all his nobler thoughts of duty to his parents, of affection for his sisters, of the claims of his employer who had been a kind friend to him for his father's sake. All he could see at that time was the opportunity to escape authority, and to launch out into a great adventure full of thrills.

He waited for a suitable opportunity when in his innocence he thought he could slip on board unobserved. Such a moment occurred and he hurriedly made his way below to the engine room and hid himself. An hour or two later all was noise, bustle and confusion. The ship was under way. Then came an experience for which he had not bargained. He had fallen asleep and was rudely awakened by feeling drenched by water—and it was hot. It transpired later that some of the lascars had watched his stealthy embarkation and had said nothing until the ship was at sea. Then failing to find him had conceived the devilish plan of driving him out with hot water hose. He soon found that it was impossible to continue in hiding and shrieked for mercy. He was taken before the chief officer who in turn introduced him to the captain. He was told in very plain and unmistakable terms that he was all sorts of things he had not known before, and among the sentences passed upon him by the 'Court' was one which gave him a shock. He was quite unsophisticated in seafaring ways, and when he heard in most solemn tones that many persons 'disappeared' at sea when they were discovered as he had been,

he was afraid and begged for mercy. As an alternative 'so many lashes' were prescribed and he was placed in the custody of an officer to await his punishment. Later on he discovered that a good deal of the findings of the 'Court' were make-believe, but in reality he was put to some very disagreeable work to 'earn his grub' while the threat of prosecution when the ship arrived at Southampton was constantly repeated. He was sincerely sorry for himself, but even more for his parents.

While he was telling me these things there was abundant evidence of his sincerity and a genuine recognition of the providential happenings.

At Southampton he was handed over to the Dock Authorities but as they were busily occupied with many matters and he was left alone in an office for quite a long time, he made his escape and again stowed away in what he thought was an outward bound vessel, preferring even the rough work he had previously performed on his first ship to the prospect of imprisonment and disgrace. If he could only get back to Australia he would return to his parents and confess his errors.

It was at this juncture apparently that he began to realise the true nature of his actions. It fretted him that his mother whom he really loved should be worried on his account and that his sisters too should be sharing her deep anxieties. For his father he also developed a respect and admiration which he confessed he had not previously felt. Indeed such thoughts had never entered his mind. The gradual rebellion against authority as it was expressed by his father's religion had prevented any finer thoughts such as he now had. It came home to him with terrific force that he had behaved in a scandalous way to his family from whom he had always experienced such consideration and help.

Fortunately for him that ship was not outward bound. At least it was not voyaging abroad. In his very cramped and uncomfortable quarters—not this time near the boilers but in a locker which appeared to be seldom used he yielded to nature's claims and fell asleep. He was awakened by two men who unceremoniously hauled him out and demanded to know who he was and what he was doing there. He told the truth and asked to be given an opportunity to work, thinking he would probably be treated similarly to his earlier experiences on the long voyage from Australia to England. To his utter astonishment and dismay the

officer, who had been brought by the man who had first seen him asleep, replied that not only were they absolutely refusing to have anything to do with such as he but that he would again be handed over to the police.

"When we get to London in the morning you're for it, young fellow."

"To London! Are you bound for London?" he asked.

"Of course we are. Where did you think we were going—the North Pole?"

"No sir, I thought you were outward bound somewhere Eastward and I wanted to get home."

"You'll get home right enough—Clink for you. That's what you'll get. We are fed up with fellows like you and won't the old man be wild when I tell him. We had three last trip home, and they're all now doing a month hard. Wait till we get to London. The first copper we see in the docks will take charge of you, and the beaks in London don't like stowaways."

How much this imaginative officer knew about London Magistrates seems very problematic. But evidently his purpose was to still further scare our young friend, and he was successful. By the time the vessel had passed through the entrance locks and was berthed alongside he was in a dreadful state of nerves.

He was taken ashore and searched by two officials who stated that they were looking for fellows like he appeared to be. Demanding to see any papers or documents revealing his identity they chose to conclude that he was an undesirable alien, who spoke very good English but did not satisfy them that he was a British subject. Thereupon one of them said he was going to a certain police depot and on the way would call in at a place where they would soon find out what country he came from.

"The Lord prepared"—a police officer.

The responsible police official at the department to which A— was taken could have questioned him in the orthodox way and failing to gain from him any further information than that already reported by the man who had brought him from the docks, could have sent him to the police cells to await an appearance before a magistrate on certain charges of defrauding shipowners and so on, but this course was not adopted.

That experienced and wise Christian in a police officer's rôle saw more than a miserably wretched youth who had been foolish

and sinful. Through the eyes of love he saw 'some mother's son' and a soul to be saved. He did not know as I know now—having carefully timed the facts, that he was being 'guided' in answer to a heart-broken mother's prayers uttered thousands of miles away.

"Your full name, please!"

"A—— R—— sir, and if you please——"

"Just answer my questions and say nothing else until you are told."

This was said firmly but kindly while the officer was writing the name given him and at the same time taking stock of the accused. In telling me of the 'interview' later he conveyed to me a wonderfully correct impression of that officer whom I well know and admire greatly.

"Where were you born?"

"Give me the date of your birth?"

"Father's name in full?"

"Mother's name in full?"

"When did you last see them?" and so on; a dozen or more questions distinctly and deliberately put, while the interrogator was becoming convinced that the answers given were perfectly true, and he was gaining as much information of the kind he wanted from the boy's manner and replies, as if the story had been related in another form.

"And what are your plans for the future, my son?"

"I have no plans, sir, but I just want to get home again as quickly as I can."

"And when you get home—what then?"

"I'll ask my father and mother to forgive me."

"And what then?"

The young fellow had no reply. He had no idea of the officer's intentions and could scarcely comprehend the purport of these questions. Visions of a charge before a magistrate and of a severe sentence to imprisonment, if the statements of the men on the ship could be accepted,—visions of his folk in Australia when they heard that their son was in goal. He was in great fear and knew not how to answer this last question. When he had asked for his father's pardon and the scenes had really been enacted which now crowded his mental outlook he could not say what he could do in the future. So these two, the police official and the culprit were

silent for a few moments. The former taking keen stock of the bewildered lad before him. Then the latter lifting his eyes to meet the gaze of his questioner, said :

"I suppose the rest I must trust to God."

"And what do you know, about God my son? Do you think He can help you in a dilemma like this?"

Then little by little the whole story was told and in a few moments the officer had made up his mind what to do. This youth was to be got back to his Australian home by the earliest possible means, and before he was further spoiled by the kind of influence under which he would undoubtedly come were he to remain in this country following a police charge and possible prison contacts. Here was a soul to be saved.

To the astonishment of A—— he was not hustled off to a police cell nor hailed before a stern magistrate instead he heard the audible part of a telephone conversation. The officer lifted his receiver and called for a number.

"Is that Mr. Dempster?"

"This is —— speaking. I'm wanting your help again. I've a young fellow here who also wants your help. May I send him to you? Oh, he's not quite a fully fledged prodigal son, but he's on the road to the far country right enough. He's run away from a good home in Australia, turned his back upon a good father because he did not like his father's strict rules about church attendance, he has caused his mother and sisters weeks of agony because they do not know whether he is alive or dead and I think if you could take him under your care and get him back to them he might become another of those whom you have been finding for Christ."

"No, he is not actually a sailor, although he has done one trip and a bit. He's a stowaway and I'm quite satisfied he is a *bona fide* British subject needing more than anything else the kind of help you can give him.

"Yes! Thank you! I'll send him along at once."

My part of the conversation the lad could only guess at, but, as he told me an hour later, he felt he was being guided to a friend.

He arrived and from his own lips I heard his story, broken when he mentioned his mother, by half restrained sobs.

"I'm a cad sir to have acted thus but with God's help I'll make amends."

On my desk lay a sheet of paper upon which I had scribbled rough notes of another telephone conversation which had taken place between the time of my talk with that police officer and the time of A——'s arrival at my office.

'God prepared'—a ship.

Plans were being made in another port for a ship which was being delivered by the builders to a purchaser abroad. It was desirable that if possible the men who composed the necessary crew should be those who would not need to be brought back to England. I had been asked to supply such officers and men if possible and it was an opportunity to help quite a number of folk whose homes were 'down-under.' Frequently such seamen find themselves stranded in this country and also find it very difficult to persuade any captain who is willing to sign them on his ship for the very obvious reason that they do not intend to complete the voyage out and home again, but will remain out East with or without permission. If they desert abroad the master is bound to make up his complement or risk penalties for being shorthanded. Sometimes fortunately such deficiencies can be made good by men stranded abroad and anxious to reach England again. Then all is well. In the present case it would be economical to discover colonials who desired to get back home.

Here then was the very opportunity for A—— if he could be fitted in. I submitted his name and particulars and he was accepted readily.

"You'll make amends," I repeated after him. "It seems you are quite confident of getting an opportunity. Do you know it is a very difficult matter usually to find a working passage such as you now need?"

"Yes sir, I suppose it is. But you'll not let me be sent to prison, will you?"

"No, I do not think that is God's plan for you. I have already found you a ship going direct to your home port."

His eyes filled with tears immediately.

"Then that is an answer to prayer," he said softly.

"Whose prayer?"

"My mother's and mine."

"Your own prayer? do you mean to say you have been praying?"

"I have indeed sir—And I know you have too."